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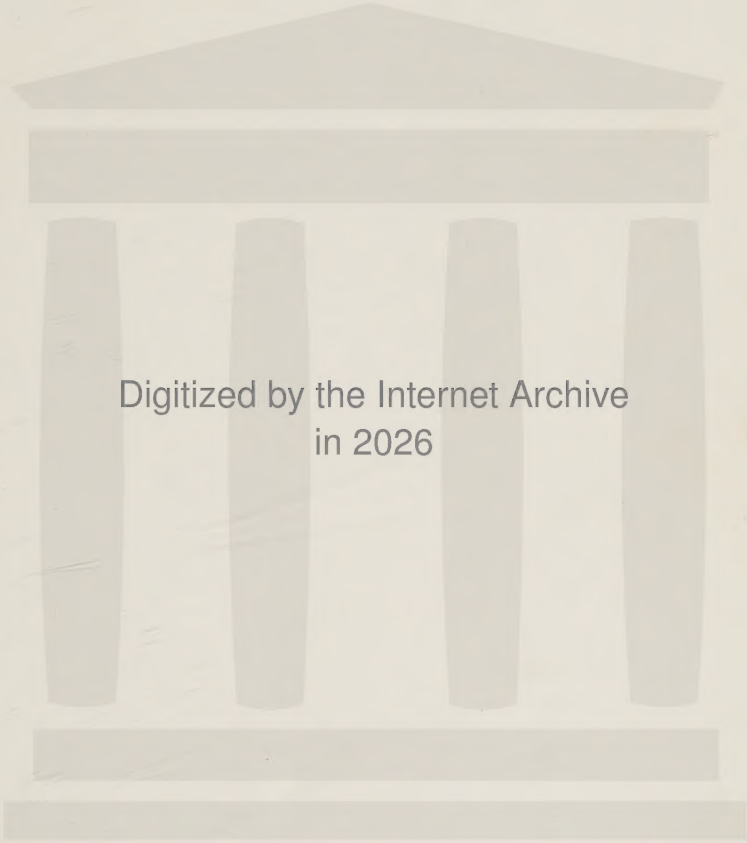
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6

SPORT IN THE HIGHLANDS OF KASHMIR

Burhel.

Bear's skull. Ovis ammon. Markhor. Ibex.

Ibex. Tibet antelope. Gazelle. Gazelle. Gazelle. Tibet antelope. Ibex.

Markhor.

Bārāsingh.

Uryal. Ovis ammon. Ibex.

Burhel.

Ovis ammon. Bear's skull.

Ibex. Yāk. Yāk's tail.

SPORT IN THE HIGHLANDS

OF

KASHMIR

BEING

A NARRATIVE OF AN EIGHT MONTHS' TRIP IN BALTISTAN AND LADAK, AND A LADY'S EXPERIENCES IN THE LATTER COUNTRY; TOGETHER WITH HINTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF SPORTSMEN

BY

HENRY ZOUCH DARRAH

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

WITH FIFTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS (FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE WRITER) AND TWO MAPS

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PREFACE

The narrative given in this book is based upon notes generally recorded on the evening of the day on which the events described occurred. A diary was regularly kept, and in addition a separate account was always written, while the facts were fresh in the memory, of anything that appeared of special interest.

When we were preparing for the expedition we found great difficulty in getting information as to the country, and especially as to what should be taken with us, and what left to be purchased at Srinagar. And when we arrived in Kashmir we did not find it easy to ascertain the correct prices of things, or the rates that should be paid for services rendered. The chapters containing suggestions on these points were written to save others, who might be similarly situated, from the trouble we experienced.

It will be seen from the story that there is no reason why a lady should not accompany her husband, while the

latter is shooting in Ladāk. Though the marches are wearisome and most of them long, there is rarely any racing amongst sportsmen for nalas, riding ponies are always procurable, and the ground is easy almost everywhere. But in Bāltistān the case is entirely different, chiefly owing to the keen competition for nalas. A sportsman going there must race, and practically no lady could travel at the pace necessary for this, even if she were good over bad ground and had no objection to rope bridges.

The illustrations are all from my own photographs. As explained in the text, most of my negatives proved failures; but a few were found fit to reproduce.

The names given to the Kashmiri shikāri and tiffin coolie are fictitious. In all other cases the real names have been employed.

I have to acknowledge the assistance of many friends, who were kind enough to read the proof sheets, as well as the courtesy with which I have been treated by my publisher, Mr. Rowland Ward.

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CHAPTER I

MARCH 15-25—LUCKNOW TO SRINAGAR

Start — Ekkas — Kohāla — Garhi — Uri — Rope Bridges — Bārāmulla — Dungas — Shooting grounds — Haramosh — Conditions of journey — Tents—Srinagar—Parwānas—Shopping—Battery.

It was not till the spring of 1896 that I was able to carry out the shooting trip in Kashmir, which I had projected twelve years before, when in 1884 I bought Col. Ward's book dealing with the sport to be had in that celebrated land. There had been difficulty about leave, and I had been obliged to go home three times, and one thing or another had interfered. But at last I had settled everything, and with a year's furlough in hand, my wife and I started on the 15th of March 1896 from Lucknow, where I was then Deputy-Commissioner, for Rawal Pindi, the nearest railway station to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, and the starting-point of the tongas for that country. We took with us two servants—a khidmatgar[1] named Hāde Hosein, and a sweeper—trusting to obtaining whatever others we should want on our arrival. The only other member of the party

[1] Table-servant.

was a dog of my wife's, named "Toto," which she was pleased to call a bull terrier.

It was a hot afternoon when we left, but we were comfortable enough, for I had reserved a through compartment and had a liberal supply of ice. The reserved compartment was well worth the extra cost, for not only did it save us from the intrusion of fellow-travellers, but it obviated the necessity of changing at Sahāranpur and of getting up in the middle of the night when the train reached Pindi. On arrival at that station our carriage was cut off, and we slept comfortably till the morning, when we woke to find ourselves at a quiet siding.

Before leaving Lucknow, we had ordered a large supply of stores from Bombay, and some tents from Cawnpore, to be sent to Srinagar to meet us. I had also arranged with the Tehsildar of Rawal Pindi, to have six ekkas awaiting us at the railway station to take our things on when we got there.

Accordingly on the morning of the 18th when I left the carriage, the ekka drivers were on the platform ready to take over the luggage. We had intended starting ourselves at the same time, but as one of our servants—the khidmatgar—had contrived to get himself left behind at Tilhar, we had to wait at Pindi for the day to allow of his overtaking us. But there was no need to detain the luggage, so I sent off nearly everything in charge of the sweeper. The luggage was carried by four ekkas, and could, I afterwards learned, have been taken easily by three, for it weighed about 15 maunds (1 md. = 82$\frac{2}{7}$ lbs.), and each ekka will carry 5 maunds.

An ekka is a springless cart of peculiar shape moving

on two small wheels and drawn by one pony. Those at Pindi being intended for luggage and meant for a long journey, were particularly strong, and horsed with good fourteen-hand nags. The shafts were thick bamboos, meeting between the wheels, and passing out in a wide V over the pony's back. A leather thong united the

EKKAS LOADED WITH LUGGAGE.

ends of the V and rested on the saddle of the harness. Stretched taut like a bow-string this thong allowed of a certain amount of play, and saved both driver and pony from the jars that would otherwise have resulted on a rough road from the use of absolutely rigid shafts.

The khidmatgar turned up in the afternoon, and the following morning one of Messrs. Dhanjibhoy & Co.'s tongas[1] appeared at the hotel, and we started. The

[1] See illustration on p. 497.

ekkas were to reach Kohāla, about 70 miles out, that evening, the 19th, and we proposed arriving there at the same time. As the ekkas could not do more than 30 to 35 miles a day, with one pony each for the whole distance of about 160 miles, we had to suit our pace to theirs. But as they had got a start of twenty-four hours, we were able to do a double stage that day in the tonga.

The journey to Srinagar has been so often described that it seems unnecessary to give details as to it here. But it should be remembered that the conditions vary considerably in different years. Mr. E. F. Knight, who visited Kashmir in 1891, went in the beginning of April, as he tells us in *Where Three Empires Meet*, and found eight feet of snow on the road near Murree. When we passed on the 19th of March 1896, there was a little snow drifted up at the side of the road immediately below Murree, but that was all. Many people also had gone in before us, so the road must have been clear unusually early that year.

The Kohāla dak-bungalow,[1] the last in English territory, was not reached till after dark, at 7.30 P.M., when we were lucky enough to get the only unoccupied room. The arrangements were very dirty and uncomfortable, but a fire was a great luxury, and compensated for a good deal.

The next morning, the 20th, we entered Kashmir, when we crossed the Jhelum by a fine iron bridge, and after paying the light tolls there charged for the upkeep of the road, continued our journey to Garhi, about 35 miles on. Here there is a good bungalow, not very much above the level of the Jhelum, which

[1] Traveller's rest-house.

flows immediately in front. We arrived about 1.30 P.M., and as there was no special object in hurrying on, and our ekkas could not get farther that day, we decided to halt. On the way we passed a prettily-situated dak-bungalow at Dulai, which I photographed when returning from Srinagar in December. In the evening we

DULAI REST-HOUSE FOR TRAVELLERS ON THE SRINAGAR-RAWAL PINDI ROAD.

walked up the river a short distance and saw a rope bridge[1] for the first time, a structure described later on. The one at Garhi, though of three main ropes like most of those in Bāltistān, differs from them in being made of leather thongs instead of birch twigs. We were glad when we came back to get at some of the luggage in the ekkas, which had in the meantime arrived, for the air was decidedly colder, and we found that the clothes in

[1] See illustration on p. 28.

which we had left the plains of India were not nearly warm enough. We here made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. W. Mitchell, who, with their two children, were on their way also into Srinagar. Mr. Mitchell, who had spent many years in Kashmir and shot a great deal, very kindly gave me a lot of most valuable information as to the shooting to be had there.

On the 20th we went as far as Uri, another stage of about 35 miles. The bungalow here is a particularly good one, most picturesquely situated on a small plain closely surrounded by mountains. During the day's drive we saw a bridge made of a single rope. A loop was hanging from it, into which, while we were looking, a man got, who then let himself swing down by his own weight to the middle. A light line was attached to the loop in which he sat, connected with the two ends of the bridge, and when the impetus of his swing was over, his friends on the far bank began pulling the line to help him, while he worked away at the main rope with his hands and thus wormed himself, so to speak, across. His progress after passing the middle was slow, and his position above the foaming Jhelum seemed very precarious indeed.

Close to Uri there are two rope bridges side by side; one of a single rope and one of three. When on our way back from Kashmir I was able to get a photograph of these.[1] At Uri we heard of a fine markhor[2] which had been seen in the Kājnāg mountains just opposite to where we were, and I resolved to look him up at the beginning of the winter if he had not been shot by then.

[1] See illustration on p. 65.

[2] *Capra falconeri.* The largest variety of wild goat.

On the 21st we reached Bārāmulla about noon, after a short drive of 21 miles. I had arranged with an agent in Srinagar to have boats here waiting for us, as the road into the capital had not then been completed. I had particularly asked for a boarded dunga to be sent for us, as the weather in March is very cold, but found instead that only a matted dunga had arrived. Dunga is the name for the Kashmir travelling boat. Some are closed in with boards at the sides, others have only mats. Travellers to Kashmir in the early part of the year should remember the fact, that a matted dunga is a very cold and cheerless conveyance, as a fire cannot be lighted in one. A boarded dunga, besides being naturally less draughty, has usually a fireplace—a very material advantage.

As it happened, however, we did not suffer, for a friend of mine, Captain Merewether, with whom I had been in communication about this trip, and who had been shooting duck on the Wular lake, had come down to Bārāmulla to meet us. He had seen the condition of things, and before our arrival had transferred his own belongings to our dunga, and very kindly placed his comfortable house-boat at our disposal. Our ekkas arrived about 2.30 P.M., and their contents were quickly transferred to the two boats for luggage and servants which had also been sent for us.

About an hour later we all started, the flotilla, consisting of Merewether's house-boat, his cook-boat, and our three boats, being towed up the river, which is here very tranquil and with hardly any current—a curious contrast to the foaming torrent rushing over boulders,

which had been beside us the whole way from Kohāla. We reached Sopur at the edge of the Wular lake about 11.30 P.M. It was important to get as far as this before tying up for the night, for the boatmen will not cross the lake except in daylight and when there is no wind. As a rule the calmest time is in the morning.

As it happened, however, the morning of the 22nd dawned in wind and rain, and we could not move till about 2.30 P.M., when it partially cleared. Then we crossed the lake, and as rain again came on, tied up for the night. This latter proceeding surprised me a good deal, for the boatmen had practically done nothing all day; but I soon learned that Kashmiris cannot be induced to work in rain—no pay being apparently sufficient to induce them to do anything so disagreeable.

Meantime I had been finding out a good deal in connection with my projected expedition. Merewether had engaged for me, and brought with him to Bārāmulla, a shikāri whom he had employed during the cold weather, a Kashmiri Mahomedan named Abdulla. As it appeared that more than one sportsman had already left Srinagar for the shooting grounds, it became necessary to make arrangements as rapidly as possible. In Kashmir, shooting is mostly to be found in certain well-known nalas or valleys amongst the hills. This is always the case in ibex[1] shooting, and generally with regard to other game also. And as the man who first pitches his tent in a nala has the exclusive right to its shooting till he leaves, it becomes of the first importance to get early to a place for which there is likely to be competition.

[1] *Capra sibirica.* A species of wild goat.

Now the place that both Merewether and Abdulla recommended me to go to was the Haramosh district in Bāltistān. They said I should probably get markhor and certainly red bear[1] and ibex there. Abdulla knew the country well, but his ideas of geography were so exceedingly vague, that it was impossible even with the map before us to correctly locate the spot. We found the Haramosh mountain, but could nowhere discover Sarsal or Darsu, or any of the other villages he named. Consequently it was not till I reached Rondu that I really began to guess where we were going, and not till I got to Sarsal that I found out that Haramosh was really a vague name for a large district, and not a nala at all, as I all along till then had considered it to be. However, though I could not find the place on the map, I agreed to follow Abdulla's lead, and accordingly, when I got to Sopur I sent the shikāri, by Merewether's advice, on to Srinagar by land, and directed him to engage a cook and eight permanent coolies for me. The latter, I was told, would not only carry loads like temporary coolies, but would be useful in camp for cutting wood, bringing water, making grass shoes, going with letters, and other miscellaneous duties, and Abdulla asserted that I could not manage with less than eight. This was entirely wrong, as I subsequently found out; but not knowing any better then, I let the shikāri have his way.

Abdulla having been sent off, we discussed the possibility of my wife's accompanying me. It had been our intention to go to the shooting nalas together, and all our arrangements in the way of tents, stores, etc., had

[1] *Ursus isabellinus.*

been based on this assumption. But the more I learned of the sort of ground it would be necessary to go over, and the conditions under which the journey would have to be made, the more clearly I saw that she would have to be left behind. In the first place, I heard that as several men had already started I should have to do double and treble marches to overtake them, and might even be obliged to travel without tents or stores, and trust to what we could pick up by the way. Not only would this involve serious hardship and perhaps risk for a lady, but her presence would probably render the necessary speed unattainable, for coolie or pony carriage was all that was to be had, and though a few light loads could be rapidly pushed through, it might prove impossible to get sufficient transport together, at a few minutes' notice, for even the smallest amount of baggage which a lady must have. In the second place, the ground which Merewether and Abdulla both recommended me to try for—the Haramosh district—was peculiarly inaccessible. It was, Abdulla said, 35 marches from Srinagar, and the last few stages were so bad that no ponies could traverse them, as they involved going up and down ladders, and across rope bridges and round precipitous, and in some cases dangerous cliffs. Thirdly, and lastly, Merewether told me that there was still a lot of snow on the Zogi Lā, the first and, in some respects, the worst of the Kashmir passes, and that for about a week it would be necessary to travel on or in snow, and that for that period we should have to use for shelter at night the dirty dens into which constant streams of coolies had turned the rest-houses on the

Sonamerg-Tashgām road. It was evident from the above considerations that my wife must remain behind at Srinagar, and either join me later on when travelling would be easier, or await my return from Bāltistān.

This decision having been come to, we spent the greater part of the 23rd dividing our stores, while we were being towed up the Jhelum. The house-boat moved slowly, though we engaged ten extra mānjis, as the boatmen are locally called. It ought, with the extra aid given, to have easily got into Srinagar that night. But the crew were, like all Kashmiris, very lazy, and as arriving in the evening was not of much use, we did not make a fuss about the delay. Ordinarily the journey from Bārāmulla to Srinagar, including tying up for two nights, takes 48 hours. I have done it in less myself, but that involved driving the men.

We had brought four tents from Cawnpore — the manufacture of the well-known Elgin mills. One, called a Kashmir tent, 10 feet square, and weighing about $3\frac{1}{2}$ maunds (282 lbs.); two known as sowar's or native trooper's pāls, weighing 30 lbs. each; and one called a valise tent, made of waterproof material, and only weighing 12 lbs. As my wife was to remain behind it was settled that she was to have the Kashmir tent, and that another similar one for a sitting-room was to be hired for her, as well as a couple of servants' pāls for the men. This would leave me the two sowar's pāls and the valise tent, and if I hired a Cabul tent it would be enough.

The valise tent, as I afterwards found, was not required. I had bought it thinking it would be useful if I were sleeping away from my main camp for a

night or two. But I found that I did not need it, for either there was no difficulty in taking the 30-lb. tent wherever required, or it was simpler to sleep under a rock or in the open without a tent at all. I should, therefore, not recommend the 12-lb. valise tent to be included in any outfit required for Kashmir.

Early on the 24th we woke to find the boats moored at the end of the canal communicating with the Jhelum below the Munshi Bāgh. The house-boat had been brought here to avoid the current in the main channel of the river, which flows past the principal shops.

Leaving the boats to be towed up the canal to the Munshi Bāgh, we took a shikāra—the gondola of Srinagar—and went shopping. We ordered warm suits for our two Hindustani servants, another for Abdulla (who met us here), some Kashmir blankets (locally called luis), and a lot of other things, details of which are given in the closing chapters of this book.

The rest of that day was taken up with arranging about a site for my wife's camp, hiring furniture and servants for her, getting our tents from the carriers, etc., etc. In the afternoon I called on the courteous British Joint Commissioner for Leh, Captain Chenevix-Trench, and obtained written orders (parwānas as they are usually called) addressed to the Tehsildar of the Sind valley, the Tehsildar of Skardo, and the Lambardar of Haramosh, the local officials into whose jurisdictions I was about to travel, directing them to aid me in all reasonable ways in the matter of carriage and supplies. Parwānas are of considerable assistance to the stranger travelling in these wild tracts, for without local help it would be impossible

to move at all. Though a European would generally be treated with respect anywhere in Kashmir, the parwāna removes all possible excuse for neglect, and enables the Srinagar authorities to take action on complaints in a way that would not be possible if it had not been issued. Besides these, my old friend Dr. Deane, the Residency Surgeon, to whose kind advice I was greatly indebted, had obtained for me a parwāna signed by the Governor of Kashmir, directing that I was to be assisted generally throughout the Maharaja's dominions in the matter of supplies and carriage. On more than one occasion I found that when difficulties were made, the threat to report to Srinagar that the parwānas were of no use in such and such a district, had a surprising effect in producing coolies and ponies, where at first there were alleged to be none.

On the 25th I arranged my wife's tents close to a magnificent pair of chenar trees in the Munshi Bāgh, where ladies and married couples generally camp in Srinagar. The previous day I had left my measure with a Kashmiri tailor for a pair of knickers and a Norfolk jacket, of puttoo, a locally made woollen cloth something like tweed. These were produced finished by the evening of the 25th, and proved an excellent fit. The same man also supplied me with a double broad-brimmed cloth hat.

Meantime I had, besides settling my wife's camp, bought all that was recommended in the matter of leather goods, provisions, etc., and had caused everything I required with me to be loaded on a boat preparatory to leaving after dinner.

About 10 P.M., my bed having been made, I went on

board the dunga and started down the river for Mānasbal, where the permanent coolies were to meet us, and which is the usual point for beginning the long march to Bāltistān. The cook, Ramzāna by name, engaged by Abdulla, had already joined at Srinagar, and had assisted in getting my supplies.

My battery consisted of (1) a hammerless D.B. .450 Magnum Express by Rigby, taking a 362 gr. bullet and 133 grs. of powder; (2) a single .303 Lee-Metford sporting carbine with magazine; and (3) a D.B. 12-bore Paradox gun by Holland & Holland.

I had taken the greatest care in loading the cartridges for the Express, weighing not only the powder to half a grain, but also each bullet to a possible error of 2 grs., as I have always thought that too much trouble cannot be bestowed on details of this kind. If a man is prepared to go to very heavy expense in carrying out a long journey, buying valuable weapons, tents, etc., and to undertake considerable labour in getting up to his game, it would be very short-sighted if he were to grudge the extra trouble involved in the accurate loading of his cartridges. I am certain that much of the missing, which embitters the remembrance of sporting expeditions to many men, is largely due to carelessness in the loading of cartridges. A very small error in the amount of the powder, or the weight of the bullet, is enough to throw any Express out, and many a weapon is blamed for what really is the fault of the cartridge. In my own case I felt, that with as good a weapon as a maker second to none could turn out, and with cartridges in none of which was an error of one per cent possible, I had taken

every precaution, and that misses, if they occurred, would not be attributable to mistakes which foresight and care could avoid.

The cartridges for the .303 were, I understood, loaded with 40 grs. of rifleite and Jeffrey's split bullets, weighing

ROAD IN SRINAGAR LINED WITH POPLARS (p. 54).

209 grs., and were obtained ready made from the Army and Navy Stores, Bombay. The rifle came from the same establishment. I had never used a weapon of this bore, and bought it more as an experiment than from any great faith; but I had heard men speak so highly of its value, especially for hill shooting, that I thought it was worth while giving it a trial.

CHAPTER II

MARCH 26-28—SRINAGAR TO SHITKURI

Kashmir laziness—Tiffin coolie—Lui—Rice straw for grass shoes—Wet day—Mangām—First camp—Ponies—Mr. Jebb—Serwan—Gund—Difficulty about coolies—Rezin—Snow—Sonamerg Gorge—Shitkuri—Native hut.

THE morning of the 26th of March broke wet and windy, and I awoke to find the men towing. I had had an uncommonly bad night, for I had started with a cold and headache, and the wind blew in strong on me through the matting of the dunga, and the rain accompanied it and dripped from the roof, so that I slept little. We ought by daylight to have been at Mānasbal, which is a very easy night's run by boat from Srinagar, but the lazy mānjis had evidently taken it quietly during the night, and Abdulla had not kept them up to their work as it was his business to do. The result was that we did not reach Mānasbal till 1.30 P.M.

In the meantime Abdulla had arranged all the baggage into loads ready for the coolies. At Mānasbal the permanent coolies mentioned above met us, but only seven instead of eight. One of these, a man called Chānd, had been engaged as my tiffin coolie. The custom is

that the tiffin coolie does not carry an ordinary load, but accompanies his employer always, carrying a small tiffin basket with his breakfast, a blanket to sit on, and any miscellaneous things, such as a newspaper or book, he may require. It is his business to be beside his master when travelling or shooting, and to help in putting up the tent, making his bed, bringing him his meals, etc., in fact to act as a general body-servant. He has more miscellaneous duties to perform than the other permanent coolies, but he carries a much lighter load. Many men, however, never employ such a servant at all, as a temporary coolie is engaged for the tiffin, and the shikāri looks after arranging the tent.

With the permanent coolies a number of temporary coolies appeared, who swarmed on the luggage and endeavoured each to appropriate the lightest loads. Here Abdulla behaved with unexpected energy, and divided out the baggage among the men. Chānd had nothing but my Kashmir blanket or lui, in which he wrapped my tiffin basket, and a brief bag containing some papers and writing materials. The tiffin basket was simply a round leather-covered basket with a lid, about a foot in diameter, which I had bought for a rupee in Srinagar. There were of course no fittings. The lui was a rather thin but very warm blanket, about 12 feet long and 5 feet wide. Every Kashmiri who has anything to carry wraps it up in his lui, and ties this diagonally across his back, knotting it over his chest. This was how Chānd carried his load every day he was with me, and as it left his arms free and the load was a light one, it answered well enough. If the load had been heavy this method

would not have worked, as the weight would have been all on one shoulder. Coolies in Kashmir carrying heavy loads fasten them with ropes over both shoulders.

Three of the permanent coolies had come, under Abdulla's instructions, laden with rice straw for the grass shoes described later on, which are used on the Kashmir mountains, and made as required by the men. As each load was, or ought to have been about 50 lbs., the total weight should have been 150 lbs. In all probability it was not more than about a cwt. This quantity proved insufficient, and gave out in less than two months.

It was a miserable day when we landed. The rain was coming down in a steady drizzle as I stood on the muddy bank with my waterproof cape on, watching Abdulla arranging the loads amongst the quarrelling coolies. By about 2.30 P.M. everything was done, and then, accompanied by the shikāri, the cook, and Chānd, I started, leaving the coolies to follow. From my experience of coolies in Assam this seemed to me a risky proceeding, but Abdulla assured me that once the loads had been accepted by the men, they were perfectly certain to bring them in safely.

The road up the Sind valley, on which we had now entered, was practically all along the edges of rice fields, and on such a wet day was exceedingly bad going. The clay soil had been churned into sticky mud by many travellers, and as I was, unfortunately, wearing a pair of shooting boots without nails, I slipped about in the most disagreeable manner and was nearly down on several occasions. For this reason progress was slow, and it was not till 5.10 P.M. that, after going for about 8 miles,

we reached the village of Mangām. Here Abdulla proposed to halt for the night, though Kāngan, a few miles further on, was the regular stage. As the coolies were some distance behind, and were likely to take a good while on the muddy road, I agreed, and my lui being spread under a tree, I sat down with the trunk to lean up against. My brief bag was put beside me, and I was soon engaged writing letters.

About 6 P.M. the coolies filed in. There were sixteen temporary and six permanent men with loads, and in a very short time the packages were undone, the Cabul tent I had hired put up for me, and the sowar's pāls for the servants. The cook had before this obtained wood from the headman of the village, and started his fire. My table was a very light one, of the "paragon" pattern, with a top which rolled up, and the mechanism of this I had now to explain, as none of the men had ever seen one of the kind before. My bed also proved a puzzle to them, being that known as Major Elliot's patent. These articles were too complicated for the Kashmiris. The table was broken a few days after by sheer clumsiness, and had to be laid aside, and the bed gave trouble to the end, and its putting together had generally to be supervised.

My first camp was in a small grove of apricot-trees, then breaking into flower, on grassy turf, some little distance from the village houses, and with a merrily rippling stream, about 20 inches wide, flowing a few yards from my tent. By a little after seven everything was in order, and I had changed from my wet boots into dry socks and a pair of warm puttoo boots coming up above the knees. These boots can be recommended. They

are made of coarse puttoo, with leather soles and leather part of the way up the feet. They are pleasant on a cold night, and though not intended to stand any rough work, will last a considerable time if worn only in a tent.

Ramzāna soon sent in an excellent dinner of mutton broth, kidney on chupatti, roast leg of mutton and potatoes, custard pudding, and marmalade. There was no butter, as it cannot be procured good in a Kashmiri village, and I dislike tinned butter. Instead of bread I had chupatties. These things, so excellent when hot and properly made, so tough and leathery when cold or badly made, are prepared from flour or whole meal and water, and cooked on a flat iron girdle. They are usually about $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick, and about 8 inches in diameter. Mine were supposed to be made from flour, and flour was what I was charged for; but from the appearance and taste of the chupatties there must have been a great deal of bran mixed with that flour.

Before daybreak of the 27th I was awakened by hearing Abdulla arranging the loads. He had got six ponies, and the men were loading up some of the boxes when I came out of my tent. I had my chota hāzri, as the early morning meal is called in India, under a tree while my tent was being struck, and by 7 A.M. we were all ready to start.

The six ponies carried what the sixteen coolies had taken the previous day, and as each coolie had cost four annas a stage, and the charge for each pony for the same distance was only eight annas, the change in carriage was economical.

About a mile beyond Mangām I struck the Sind

river, here a wide torrent with a peculiar opalescent tinge, whose surface was covered with short, thick logs of wood, which went bobbing down the stream, knocking up every second against projecting rocks, and then swinging round into the comparatively still water immediately below. These logs, cut in the forests which clothe the mountains on the southern or left bank of the river, are intended presumably for firewood. As the carriage down costs nothing, the fact that a large percentage must be smashed to matchwood is probably immaterial.

On turning a corner a little beyond Kāngan I came on a sportsman sitting on a grassy bank, smoking a large meerschaum, as "he pored upon the brook which babbled by." We accosted each other, and he proved to be a gunner of the name of Jebb on six months' leave from Secunderabad. Neither he nor I knew exactly where our respective shikāris were taking us, and those worthies, of course, would not tell each other. Jebb was waiting for his things to come up, as he had a puppy he wanted to get carried, so I went on.

About 10.30 A.M. Abdulla stopped at the village of Serwan, and suggested that it would be a good place to breakfast. As it was pouring rain at the time, we went into the verandah of a hut a little way off the road. The verandah was full of straw and droppings,—cattle evidently inhabited it at times,—but one end was swept clean for me, while Ramzāna lighted a fire at the other and quickly had the kettle on. He had brought one coolie along with him, carrying a kiltā (or Kashmiri leather-covered conical basket), filled with the necessaries for preparing breakfast, and in half an hour after we got in he sent up

an excellent meal of grilled mutton and potatoes, tea, chupatties, and marmalade.

In the tiffin basket I had a soldier's small canteen case, consisting of a semicircular tin plate, a saucepan with a wire handle, and a frying-pan. This canteen I found most useful, and would strongly recommend every traveller in these wilds to carry. The handle of the frying-pan folds down, and the latter fits on the top of the saucepan, the plate coming between the two. Meat and potatoes can be carried in the saucepan and fried in the frying-pan. The plate is available to eat from, and the saucepan can then be used instead of a tumbler.

Meantime the rain had practically stopped, and though there was an occasional drizzle, the rest of the journey to Gund, which was our stage for the day, was delightful. We were getting higher and higher as we advanced, and the road was more stony and less muddy every mile we covered. The sight of the river, with its wonderful colour, was a constant source of pleasure.

About 2.30 P.M. we reached Gund, and here I found Jebb—who must have passed me while I was at breakfast—sitting over a fire with his feet bare, getting his shikāri to dry his socks and putties. The distance was 19½ miles from Mangām.

Abdulla, when coming along, had warned the headmen of some villages with whom he was acquainted to send on coolies for us to Gund, and it was well he took this precaution, and that the men minded what he said, for on arrival at Gund we were told by the village headman, that three sahibs and a lady had that morning

left with ninety coolies to cross the Zogi Lā, and that consequently no more coolies were to be had.

The difficulty about getting coolies at Gund lies in the fact that the men are obliged to go through the Pass to Drās, as no change of men is obtainable before reaching the last-named place. There are only six miserably small villages (Rezin, Gāgangair, Shitkuri, Sonamerg, Mataiyun, and Pandrās) between Gund and Drās—a distance of about 55 miles—and the inhabitants of these are too few to supply coolies. Consequently all the requisite transport for the next five stages has to be obtained at Gund going up, and at Drās when coming down.

The rates fixed by the Kashmir authorities for the five days' journey to Drās amount to Rs.2.8 for each coolie during the winter, or while snow is on the ground. But travellers who are anxious to get through quickly have occasionally made much higher payments, and Abdulla told me that as much as Rs.7.8 a coolie had more than once been given. It seemed as if the village headman was making difficulties in order to get for the men a higher tariff than that fixed by the Government, and as he and the coolies were all Kashmiris, Abdulla, according to his wont, took their side, and endeavoured to induce me to promise payment at Rs.5 a head. Towards evening stray coolies began to come in, who tried to get Jebb and me to compete with each other for them, but though our shikāris were ready enough to humour them, we refused to do so, and agreed that whatever happened we would pay exactly the same. Meantime our loads had come in, our tents had been

put up, and we had each got a change. I produced my parwānas and threatened to make a report to Srinagar if transport was not supplied. The headman appeared impressed, but said he was helpless. However, as the coolies Abdulla had bespoken on the road had by this time arrived, and the headman saw we had parwānas, and were not to be cajoled or blackmailed into promising more than the regular rate, he threw up the sponge, and intimating in some way to the coolies around that it was no use to oppose us, took himself off. The men then came forward and began arranging such of the loads as were available, each man leaving his own rope round whatever package he had selected. To lighten the loads I redistributed some of my things, thus making them up to require twenty instead of sixteen men.

The tents were pitched on a charming grassy spot close to some large trees, by the side of a wide and fair-sized stream clear as crystal and cold as ice, an affluent of the Sind river below. I did not think I had ever before enjoyed water at dinner so much, and Jebb said the same thing.

Rain came on during the night, and it was raining hard when we woke in the morning. As the march to Sonamerg was a short one, we resolved to delay our start till after breakfast, by which time we hoped it would clear up. We were not disappointed, and started off about half-past twelve.

At Rezin, which we reached about 2 P.M., and where we were told the travellers ahead of us had halted the previous night, we found the first patches of snow we had so far encountered. Here we were shown the room

which had been occupied by the lady and her husband, the snow outside having prevented them from pitching their tents. It was a miserable, dirty hole, to which access was gained through a sloppy courtyard and up a broken-down set of steps.

The road crosses the river to the left bank before reaching Rezin, and crosses back a short distance further up. A couple of miles beyond the latter bridge we got regularly on to snow, and from that time until we arrived close to Tashgām on the 2nd of April, we were never off it, and never able to pitch a tent. The discomfort of this part of the journey was greater than I had imagined, not on account of the travelling, though that was bad enough, but mainly on account of the unpleasant quarters that had to be occupied each night.

About the point where we struck the snow on the path the traveller enters what is, in summer, the loveliest part of the Sind valley. This is the celebrated Sonamerg Gorge, between Gāgangair and Shitkuri, where the river rushes through a comparatively narrow and winding channel, sometimes between walls of rock, sometimes between slopes of tree-clothed hill. That evening, however, the aspect of the Gorge was anything but summer-like, as we wound our way along the sloppy and muddy track, at one moment high above the foaming river, at another down at its edge, for before us were trees laden with snow, and huge masses of ice and *débris* which had slipped down from the hillsides above. The ghastly desolation of the whole scene, the roaring river, the avalanches, the broken trees lying with their roots turned up, the big mountains on either hand

glistening white to the summit, except where the dark pine forests clothed their slopes, was rendered most impressive by the gloomy evening and the silence that hung over everything.

The light was failing fast when we neared the upper end of the gorge, and Jebb's spaniel puppy was so tired and footsore and cold, that we carried the poor little beast by turns. In many places snow had just tumbled down and obliterated the path, and it had to be made afresh by our two shikāris in front. The track for the last five miles or so consisted simply of footsteps in the snow. Where several men had passed and the footsteps were hard there was no difficulty, but when they were soft, or when we missed planting our feet exactly on the hard spot, we sank in above the knee. Presently an icy wind began to rise, and the fine snow to drive into our faces. Bending down we hurried on as well as we could, but the snow was deeper here, and not hardened by many travellers, and we floundered about a good deal. Just as it got dark, when we had done about 11 miles, we reached the village of Shitkuri, and right glad we were to see its lights, and to welcome even the miserable shelter it afforded us.

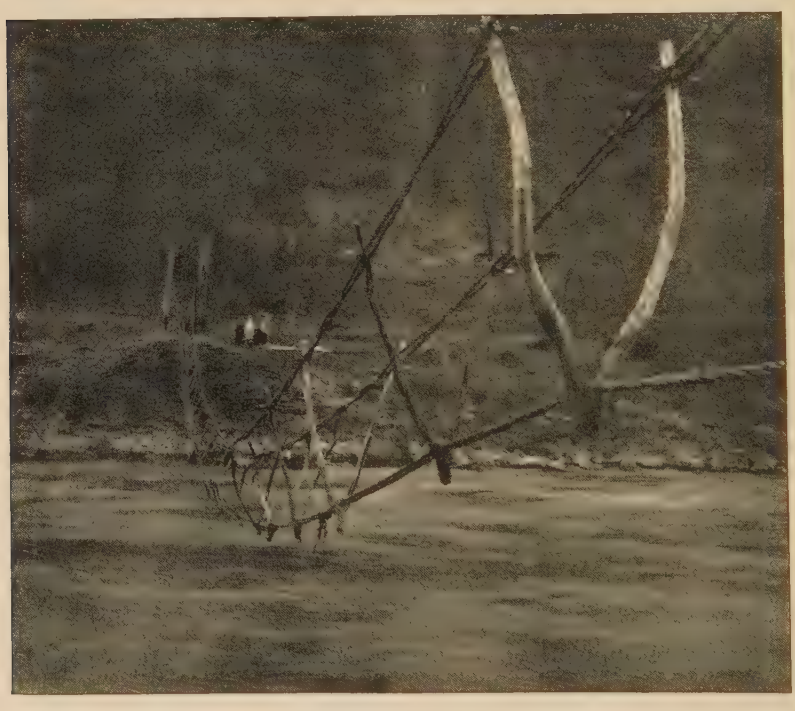
The snow was, of course, much too deep to allow of the tents being pitched ; indeed the houses were all buried in it up to the first story. It was snowing pretty hard by the time we reached the village, and the wind was bitter. The shikāris, who had gone ahead with the cook, had secured a room for us in one of the houses, and we waded through snow slush to the steps which led to the balcony. This was also ankle deep in mud, but gave admission to a low passage, which we entered crouching,

and thence passed into a small room about 15 feet square, where a fire was burning on a raised structure of stones and clay about 3 feet high. As there was no outlet for the smoke except a small window, about a foot square, and the door we had come in by, the room was pretty full of smoke. So Jebb and I sat down on a plank that happened to be on the floor, and begged that the fire might be put out. Most of the wood was then taken away, and a few pieces of resinous pine lighted and held for us, while we took off our wet boots and socks.

Jebb had a little stew in his canteen which he got heated and offered to share with me, but I preferred to wait for dinner, as I guessed my man would produce something, no matter what the difficulties were. So Jebb ate his stew, with his bare feet on a convenient log to keep them off the dirty floor, and then lay down as he was on some grass which was lying in a corner of the room, pulled his lui over him and, soldier-like, was soon fast asleep.

Meantime, sitting on my lui, I had put on a pair of dry socks which were in the bag my tiffin coolie had been carrying, while he kept the light going by starting fresh bits of pine as the others burnt out. Presently some of the coolies began to drop in. Jebb's Madrassi boy arrived with his master's bedding and a lantern. The latter was a great blessing, as it enabled me to dispense with the smoky resinous pine, by the light of which I had begun to write a letter, while the former was unpacked and some blankets flung over their sleeping owner. My bedstead also arrived and a table, but no bedding. Shortly after, my cook sent in an excellent dinner of soup, boiled fowl, potatoes, eggs, chupatties, and marma-

lade. The room we were in was only divided off by a wooden partition from the apartment in which the family of the house was, and by another from that in which the servants were collected, so that I could hear plainly the people talking and babies crying on the one side, and the



GARHI ROPE BRIDGE (p. 5).

servants cooking on the other. After dinner, my bedding not having arrived, I sat up till just midnight writing letters, and then feeling sure that the remaining coolies had stopped for the night under some convenient rock, I borrowed a sleeping-bag to lie on that Jebb was not using, and putting my brief bag under my head for a pillow, and rolling my lui round me, was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER III

MARCH 29-31—SHITKURI TO DRĀS

Grass shoes—Carriage of bedding—Sonamerg—Coloured spectacles—Bāltāl—Mr. and Mrs. Renton—The rest-house—The coolie's room—Discomfort—Jebb's snow blindness—Early start—Crossing the Zogi Lā—Machahoi—Mataiyun—Pāndrās—Drās rest-house.

LONG before daylight on the morning of the 29th of March I was awakened by cocks crowing apparently in the room, and was unable to understand it, till the owner of the establishment appeared about 5 A.M., and let out a troop of fowls from a cupboard beside the grass on which Jebb had been sleeping! The window was then opened, and we got some breakfast, and as the whole of that day's tramp was to be over snow, we rubbed our faces with vinolia cream and put on grass shoes.

No one who has not tried this very peculiar form of foot-gear would have any idea how comfortable it is, how warm it keeps the feet in snow, and what a foothold it gives one on everything but mud. The term grass shoe is something of a misnomer, for the material of which it is made is not grass, and the article itself is not a shoe, but a sandal. Rice straw twisted into ropes is the material, the ropes being plaited so as to form a sole about half

an inch thick, with an ingenious arrangement of strings of the same substance as the sole, whereby this is fastened to the foot. As one of these strings is intended to come up between the large toe and the others, it is necessary that the sock worn with the grass shoe should have a separate division for the large toe. The traveller, about to put on a grass shoe, dons first one of these socks, usually of puttoo wool, and over it a clumsy but comfortable quilted sock, also provided with the toe division above mentioned. This quilted sock is made like an ammunition boot, and is laced up the front in the same way. Over this the grass shoe is fastened. The result, as far as appearance goes, is particularly clumsy and ungainly, but for practical use in snow, or amongst slippery rocks, or on a steep slope, there is nothing I have seen to come near it. I had the curiosity to measure one of my shoes one day. I traced the outline on paper, and found that the greatest length and breadth at right angles to each other was $12\frac{3}{8}$ by $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches.

Twelve of my coolies had, as I surmised, spent the night under a convenient rock where wood and water were obtainable. They walked in quietly in the morning, and I made no remarks for fear they should desert, but I noted the names of the twelve for future guidance. This seemed to have a great effect, and for some days afterwards they were asking the shikāri what the sahib was going to have done to them. Also I gave orders that my bedding was invariably in future to be carried by a permanent coolie, so that it might always be sure to arrive in time. But as this was a heavier load than these lazy Kashmiris liked to carry, I had much trouble after-

wards in getting my wishes attended to. This is a thing that all travellers in these parts should insist on, as the want of one's bedding at night causes more discomfort, in my opinion, than even the want of food.

At Sonamerg, about two miles beyond Shitkuri, there is a post and telegraph office, and I took the opportunity to post my letters and send a wire.

Then we marched on, and soon overtook a lady and gentleman endeavouring to make head against the difficulties of the road. The gentleman was behind, floundering along, as we were doing, through the soft snow. The lady was a little in front sitting in her dandy—a kind of sedan chair—which had been put down in the snow while the coolies changed.

With a word or two of greeting we passed on, and about noon stopped for breakfast, which was cooked for us in a post-runner's log hut. These shelters exist every few miles along this route, so that were a snowstorm to come on suddenly no runner would be far from a refuge of some kind.

Before having breakfast we had taken off our wet socks and grass shoes, and got them partially dried over the fire lighted for cooking in a corner of the shed. But it was cold work putting them on again and starting to continue our tramp. I wore coloured glasses to save my eyes from the blinding effects of sun reflected from the snow. The servants and the coolies all wore theirs, but Jebb said that these spectacles hurt his eyes, and would not wear his.

About 6 P.M. we came in sight of Bāltāl, where we were to halt for the night before attacking the Pass in the morning. We had covered about 12 miles. There

is no village here, and it is difficult to convey an idea of the extreme desolation of the scene that was then before us. A few of our coolies, and the travellers we had passed, had got on ahead while we were at breakfast, and the former looked like ants, creeping along in single file over the immense expanse of white. No human habitation of any kind was visible, though we were told a rest-house had been erected here. Presently we saw two figures occupying a small black spot on the edge of a ravine, and closer examination revealed the fact, that they were a lady and gentleman sitting in a small patch cleared of snow, and which turned out to be part of the roof of the rest-house. They were the couple we had passed in the morning, and proved to be a Mr. and Mrs. Renton, who had recently come from Somaliland. A small table with tea things stood in front of them, as they sat with their backs to the Pass, from which a bitter wind was blowing.

On inspection the rest-house proved to be an undesirable residence. It consisted of three rooms, forming a sort of barrack with a verandah in front, and was situated facing the slope leading down to the ravine, in which ran the stream coming from the Pass. The snow from the front of the verandah had been shovelled down the slope, and a certain amount of light could get in through the three doors. There being no windows to the rooms they were only lighted through these doors. The verandah was full, in such parts as were dry, of coolies and loads. As its roof, and that of the rooms, was flat, the melting snow leaked through, and the greater part of the mud floor was a quagmire. Two of the rooms were so

deep in mud that even the coolies would not occupy them, and the steady drip from the roof, which we heard as we peered into the darkness inside, told us only too plainly that no shelter was to be obtained there. In the third room, below the part of the roof on which the couple above mentioned were sitting, and probably on account of the snow having been swept away, there were two dry patches, and here some of the Rentons' things had been unpacked.

There being evidently no place for us in the rest-house, Jebb and I turned to the hut erected for coolies. This was similar in shape and position to the building just described, but was much smaller, had only one room, and no verandah. The snow had not been cleared away from the front, but a hole had been dug down through it to the door, for everywhere around the drifted snow stood as high as the roofs of the two buildings. Standing in the doorway, and looking into the darkness within, we could see nothing except a speck of light, apparently a candle, some distance away to the left. Stumbling across coolie loads, and shoving aside coolies and servants, we made our way to this, while a few pine faggots were lighted to enable us to prospect further. The light proved to be a candle in a lantern on a table. Beside the table were two beds, and on these lay the other two sportsmen we had heard of, both smoking like tugs, a most necessary precaution in the fetid air they were breathing. We introduced ourselves, and explained our position, and intimated that we proposed to occupy the remainder of the same room, if they did not object to our turning out some of their luggage, most of their servants,

and nearly all their coolies. They agreed, and we proceeded to clear a place for ourselves. The rest of the room, which was a fairly big one, was packed tight with coolies and their loads. I am not exaggerating when I say packed tight. The party of four which preceded us had about ninety porters, and as only a few of these were in the verandah of the rest-house, the balance were in this room, and it was with the greatest difficulty we forced our way, by the light of the smoky faggots, through this mass of malodorous humanity. The smell in that place, as we began moving the men out, was something indescribable, and I would have given a good deal for my pipe. With some difficulty we made room for ourselves, and the more necessary of our loads were brought in. I superintended the putting up of my table and cot, and had my bed made. Jebb did the same for his, and then we lighted a couple of candles, and the pine faggots were taken away. But our faces were a sight by that time, for the smuts that resulted from the resinous wood had settled on us, and touching our skins anywhere with a handkerchief meant blackening the latter. It was a pleasing situation altogether, but it was better than being outside, for, after all, the roof of the part of the room we had chosen did not leak, and the cold wind could not get at us. The only parts of the floor that were wet, were those directly under the drip from the roof, and the part close to the door, where the melting snow from outside trickled through, and where the mud had been worked up by passing feet into a small swamp.

Going out presently, I saw my energetic but dirty cook preparing our dinner in a small cleared space under

the shelter of the wall of the hut, and on my asking him what he was going to give us, he said, with much pride, that he would give us a "complete dinner just as usual." It was always a source of astonishment to me how this man, after a fatiguing march, with hardly any materials or appliances, and no proper cooking arrangements, would turn out a respectable dinner. It was almost a point of honour with him not to allow difficulties to interfere with his work. A hot dinner, he considered, should always be sent up, and all the time he was with me I do not think I ever had a cold meal unless from my own deliberate choice.

The Rentons were just going down from their airy seat, when I went round to speak to them. They had caused one of their small tents to be put up on a dry spot in the room they had selected, and proposed in this way to protect themselves from the wet. Mr. Renton declared, that, had he realised the character of the rest-houses and what the journey involved, he would never have brought his wife. Any one of us that night would willingly have given a long sum for a clean, dry room with a fireplace that would not smoke, and a boarded floor ; and it seemed hard to understand why the Durbar could not see its way to constructing decent rest-houses along this route, and charging sufficient rent to pay for their upkeep. Indeed, if it had even made the roofs of those that we saw, sloping instead of flat, dryness could have been secured, but to make flat-roofed structures, which must hold up the snow, and into which when it melts the water must drip, seemed entirely incomprehensible.

At 2 A.M. on the morning of the 30th Abdulla woke us, and our companions at the other end of the room

were astir soon after. Jebb then found that his eyes were affected by snow blindness, and that he would be unable to attempt the Pass that day, so he sent a messenger off to Srinagar to try and get some medicine, and settled to stay where he was. By 3.15 A.M. the loads were all made up, and I was standing outside ready to start. There was a misty moon, luckily only a day past the full, and this was a great help. The early start was necessary, so as to get over as much of the road as possible while everything was frozen. Once the sun got up the snow would melt, and the labour would be greatly increased. The Zogi Lā (Lā is the Tibetan word for Pass) is one of the most troublesome that the traveller going north from Srinagar encounters, mainly on account of the snow that is found on it at almost all times of the year. It is only 11,500 feet above the sea, but is rarely quite clear of snow. The bends in the path between Bāltāl and the top are something like those in the letter Z. We travelled first, in the teeth of a bitter wind, up a gentle incline going north, or nearly so. Then we struck east, straight across a number of avalanches, climbing up and down huge masses of hard snow, tons in weight. This brought us to the mouth of the gorge over the frozen river, and up this we kept between high perpendicular rocks, till, after ascending for some time, we turned north once more. This was the steepest part, and we practically here went up a set of steps made by the coolies who preceded us. At the top of the ascent we turned up a gentle slope towards the north-east, and a short time after had got over the highest point, and were actually, though we did not know it, descending.

The Rentons had not started with me, but the two sportsmen we found in the hut when we arrived the day before had come on. The going was firm and not difficult until the sun rose. The path consisted merely of the track made by the leading coolies, and very severe labour it entailed after a time. It was simply a series of holes, such as are made by an elephant when he goes across a partially dry rice field. Into these holes we had to put our feet, lifting them high from one hole to the next. The labour of stepping like this was bad enough while the snow was firm, but became very great when the risen sun began to warm the air. Frequently the bottom of the hole into which I put my foot gave way when my weight came on it, and I sank into snow up to the hips. Occasionally I did not hit off the right spot, and the same result would follow.

I reached the Machahoi rest-house, some 10 miles from Bāltāl, about 12.30, feeling exceedingly done, and shortly after the two other sportsmen came in. With great difficulty, owing to the fact that no trees grow near Machahoi and there is no village, enough wood was procured to make some tea. The Rentons arrived a little later, and on the trouble about wood being represented, resolved to go on to Mataiyun, the regular stage. The other two and I were so sick of going through the soft snow, that we resolved to stay where we were, and do with anything in the way of dinner that could be prepared. But as there was no use in keeping all the coolies in that dreary spot, I sent on every load but those actually required for the night. There were three rooms in the rest-house, which was a counterpart

of the one at Bāltāl, but two of them were deep in mud with the dripping snow. One, however, was luckily dry, and in this we three arranged our beds and tables. The thermometer stood at 34° F. outside in the warmest part of the afternoon.

In order to take advantage of the cold, and travel while the snow surface was frozen and hard, I was up at 2 A.M. on the morning of the 31st, and off an hour afterwards. I left my companions asleep, and did not come across them again. About daylight we reached the village of Mataiyun, which is some 16 miles from Bāltāl, and where there are a few miserable flat-roofed sheds, in one of which the Rentons had sought shelter the previous evening. It snowed most of the way, but as the surface on which we moved was hard, there was no great difficulty to speak of. In places where avalanches had crossed the path the going was, however, bad, as tons of snow had been deposited in huge blocks, and climbing over and round these was exactly like travelling in a rocky ravine filled with blocks of stone.

At Mataiyun the houses were buried in snow to the roofs, and it was only the sight of a little smoke slowly issuing, apparently from the ground, here and there, that suggested the possibility of human habitations in that dreary expanse. On arrival, the shikāri went about amongst the hovels, to call up my coolies who had gone on the night before, while I sat down on the edge of a roof, with my feet dangling over the hole made in the snow to give access to the doorway, and with an umbrella lent me by Ramzāna over my head, waited while he got me a cup of tea. It was a curious situation. Not a

living thing, or suggestion of a living thing, except the curling smoke, visible anywhere. Nothing but the white valley around, and broken rocks standing out far up on the hillsides, and over all the steadily descending snow.

Luckily there was no wind, and in half an hour we were all on foot again. About 5 miles further we reached Pāndrās. Although the distance covered was very little, the travelling through the soft snow was most laborious and tedious, and necessitated frequent halts.

I was here overtaken by the Rentons, and the village headman very civilly cleaned out a dry room for us, and we had breakfast together. Mrs. Renton said that, as her coolies had found it impossible to carry her through the soft snow the previous day, she had walked the distance to Machahoi. She was a delicate-looking woman, and it was surprising to see how well she was bearing the discomforts she was going through. Of course she wore grass shoes like all of us, and, as no quilted socks small enough for her were procurable in Srinagar, she had an additional trial in the boat-like things she was compelled to wear. Above the socks she wore khāki[1] putties,[2] and a sensible, gray puttoo skirt came nearly down to her ankles. A gray puttoo Norfolk jacket, a muffler round her neck, blue goggles, and a soft hat completed her costume. Each of us had, of course, our faces well smeared with vinolia cream, or lanoline, to prevent the skin peeling from the effects of the sun reflected up from the snow.

[1] Dust coloured.

[2] Cloth bandages wound round the legs from ankle to knee, largely worn in India.

Altogether, as we laughingly remarked to each other, on starting after breakfast, we presented a comical, though very business-like appearance.

Most of the way to Drās, about 6 miles on and 17 from Machahoi, the snow continued to fall, and we arrived at that comparatively large village about 6.30 P.M., very wet and tired. The shikāri and Ramzāna had gone on ahead, to give notice of our coming, and on my arrival, a little before the Rentons, the Thanadar, as the local official in charge here is called, came to meet me, and said that there was "ample accommodation" in the rest-house.

This imposingly named building was flat-roofed, like all others in this neighbourhood, and contained many straggling rooms. The snow had been mostly removed from against the walls and off the roof, but lay in heavy drifts all round. Descending from its level to that of the doorway, I entered a windy sort of corridor, where a good part of the floor was covered with ice, owing to the drip from the roof having frozen. Here I was told the loads would be placed for the night. Beyond this was a doorless aperture, which led into an earthen-floored room about 12 feet square, with a small unglazed window near the top of the wall, a hole in the middle of the roof, and a fireplace provided with a chimney. This, I was told, was the place I was to occupy, and it had been prepared for my reception a few minutes before my arrival, by the removal of certain coolies, the dying embers of whose fire were then filling the place with smoke, and the odour of whose presence still hung heavy about the apartment. A larger cham-

ber, some little distance away, had been set aside for the Rentons, and I found my cook already at work in a third room next to it.

Going back to my own quarters, I stuffed the window with rice straw to keep out the wind, drove two faggots into the mud wall at each side of the doorway, and hung a waterproof sheet over a string connecting them to insure some privacy, and had a fire lighted in the fire-place to secure warmth. The hole in the roof, though partially protected from the weather by a small covering built above it, was a great nuisance, as the snow kept melting and dripping through. This also occurred in other parts of the room, and though I moved my bed frequently, seeking for a dry spot, there were pools on my waterproof before I got into bed. I remembered with envy the brick-floored, dry stables of Lucknow, and was glad to think that none of the horses I had left behind me in India were that night in as bad quarters as their master.

A number of the loads had got very wet, especially the bedding valises, and these, as well as the clothes I had been wearing all day, had to be dried before the fire. The result was, that as the chimney smoked considerably, the room was soon full of smoke and steam, through which my two candles shone with a misty light. It was a comfort, however, to get some hot water, and to wash my feet and hands.

Drās being a post-office I got letters here, and was busy till rather late, writing in reply, while I turned the clothes, etc., before the fire. I could not telegraph, however, as I was told that the wire to Sonamerg was all

under snow. Indeed, I knew this myself, for I had repeatedly seen, after crossing the Pass, the tops only of telegraph posts sticking up out of the snow, and had frequently stepped over the wire where the path crossed the line. In many places the wires and posts were completely buried, and lay for miles many feet beneath us as we travelled over the surface.

The Rentons, notwithstanding their own discomfort, kindly asked me to dine with them, but I had too much writing to do, and too many things to dry to leave my room. About midnight I turned in, lulled to sleep by the sound of the wind outside, and the steady drip on the floor beside me, as well as on the bedclothes, which latter annoyance I was too tired and sleepy to take any further trouble to avoid.

CHAPTER IV

APRIL 1-7—DRĀS TO THURGON

Delay in getting coolies—Quarters at Duldul—Serai at Tāshgām—Kharbu—Dirty Serai there—Hardās—Badness of road—Character of the villages—Advancing summer—Māshung—Bagicha—Changing boots—Kharmang — Tolti—Parkutta—Thurgon.

THE next morning, the 1st of April, I was up about six, and had everything ready to start in an hour. But we were much later getting off, for the Thanadar had difficulty in obtaining the fresh coolies that are required here, to take the place of those that had come with us from Gund, and who were now to be discharged. To the twelve coolies who had slept on the road on the 28th, and left me without my bedding that night, I gave only the bare Rs.2.8 prescribed by the printed tariff, but the others got a present in addition.

About 10 A.M. we started, and had a bad time, floundering along through the soft snow. Going ahead of the Rentons about noon, I reached the village of Duldul, 8 miles on, about 2.30 P.M., and here resolved to stay for the night, as owing to the late start we should have been unable to get to Tāshgām, the usual stage, till after dark. There being no rest-house, I selected two rooms

in the village, which the headman very good-naturedly placed at our disposal. One, which I proposed to occupy myself, was situated over a cattle stable, and a few holes in the floor allowed the odours from below to come up. On my pointing this out, the holes were filled up with stones and earth. In one corner was a large heap of goat manure, which also, when I suggested it, was removed. One wall—made of wattle and daub—only came up three-fourths of the way to the roof, but as this arrangement admitted plenty of light and air, it was an advantage rather than the reverse. Immediately below was the cattle-yard attached to the stable underneath. The roof of my room was a little over 5 feet high, so I could not walk upright. It also leaked in several places, but I found a corner where the snow did not melt through. A lot of firewood was stowed along one wall, but this did no harm, and it was allowed to remain. When the floor was swept, and some clean, sweet-smelling, aromatic grass brought in, the room became quite a pleasant place to stop in—a great improvement on the quarters I had occupied the previous night.

For the Rentons I selected a larger room—a sort of hay-loft—partly filled with clean aromatic grass, something like what had been brought in for me, and provided with a window. The only objection to it was that to enter, it was necessary to climb up a rather rickety ladder. The Rentons got in about an hour after me, having had a very trying march. The dandy men had been falling about so in the melting snow, that they could not carry Mrs. Renton, who had had to walk all the way. However, we got into dry foot-gear, and had break-

fast, or rather lunch. Then sitting in that part of my room which did not let in wet, we whiled away the afternoon with cards, and quite enjoyed ourselves, more especially as the snow kept falling steadily most of the time, and we could see every now and then regular avalanches coming down, and sweeping the track we should have had to keep had we gone on that afternoon.

HOUSES OCCUPIED WHEN HALTING AT DULDUL.

On the morning of the 2nd we were off by about 5.20. It was daylight soon after we set out, which was a good thing, as Mrs. Renton was rather nervous going across a nasty snow slope immediately above the river. An avalanche had come down here the previous day, and the leading men of our party had to make footsteps in the newly-fallen snow.

We reached Tāshgām (6½ miles on) about 11 A.M., the snow becoming less and less as we advanced. Here we

went up to the roof of the Serai, washed our feet while we dried our socks and putties in the sun, and had breakfast, in a civilised manner, at a table and sitting in chairs. The furniture was obtained from the Rentons' loads, which had arrived much about the time that we ourselves got in.

The Serai is a square enclosure full of small rooms surrounding a courtyard. The rooms have no windows, and it is usual for the occupant who requires a fire, to light it in the centre of the mud floor, and let the smoke go up through the hole in the roof. The building was full of coolies, and cattle and ponies occupied the courtyard, the floor of which was simply a mass of liquid mud and manure. Renton had with him a copy of Knight's book, *Where Three Empires Meet*, and at breakfast looked up his description of the march to Leh. He read aloud the following extract referring to the place where we were at the time:—

"We put up for the night in the Serai of the little village of Tāshgām. One need not pitch the tents at any stage between Mataiyun and Leh, as there are State rest-houses for the accommodation of travellers, *for the use of which no charge is made.*"

The italics are mine. Sitting where we were, looking down into the liquid filth of the Tāshgām Serai courtyard, and the small coolie-inhabited, smoky, muddy pig-sties which surrounded it, and remembering what we had just experienced at Bāltāl, Machahoi, Mataiyun, and Drās, we appreciated the grim, though unconscious irony of that closing sentence, "accommodation . . . for the use of which no charge is made."

After breakfast we went on again, quite pleased to find firm ground underneath us once more, instead of the yielding snow, though, in many places, we were walking simply through slush. It was a bright, clear afternoon, and after a pleasant tramp of six miles—the first enjoyable one for days—we walked with soaked feet into Kharbu, —little Kharbu as it is called, to distinguish it from another place of similar name further on. Here we were delighted to find that the ground was so free from snow that our tents could be pitched. Abdulla had only put up a sowar's pāl for me, but this I found enough, as my bed was able to get into it on one side, and my three mule-trunks on the other, leaving a passage between. We were camped right over the Drās river, whose course we had been following since we saw it first—a tiny stream —just below the highest point of the Zogi Lā.

After changing, I went over to look at the Serai, where our servants had gone, and where our dinner was being cooked. It was very similar to the one at Tāshgām, but somewhat smaller. A large heap of manure about 4 feet high stood in one corner of the courtyard, and the melting snow had carried much of it in liquid form over the ground around, transforming the earth into a swamp, which a few ponies helped to churn up still further. The stench was awful. A couple of logs across this formed pathways to the little rooms around, from one of which I could hear the sound of Ramzāna's voice. I considered it better to avoid too close an inquiry as to the circumstances under which dinner was being cooked, and beat a hasty retreat to my clean little tent.

The next morning, the 3rd, we were up as usual at

4 and off by 5.15. As we were no longer on snow we had given up the grass shoes, and resumed our boots and chaplies.[1] About 2 miles short of the village of Chanegund we left the Leh road, and crossing the Drās river, turned off towards Skardo. About ten o'clock, having gone ahead by myself, I arrived at Hardās, a good-sized village, 8 miles from Kharbu. Here the coolies had to be changed, and the headman professed his inability to get the total number required. I only wanted seventeen, and these could have been produced in an hour, but the Rentons required fifty-seven, and this was quite another pair of shoes. Not liking to go off with the few available men and leave the Rentons in the lurch, I resolved to camp here and give time for all the necessary coolies to be collected.

The Rentons arrived about noon, and we breakfasted and made ourselves comfortable, and in the afternoon I had the first tub I had had since leaving Srinagar. When marching fast it is practically impossible to tub, and it is surprising how soon in a cold climate, and especially when in snow, one gets used to doing without it.

The post-office at Kargil being not far off, I took the opportunity to send a messenger with some letters. In the evening the headman said the requisite number of coolies, supplemented by ponies, which we could now again use as we were out of the snow, had all been collected, and we could go on in the morning.

The following day, the 4th, I went half-way from Hardās to Olthingthang with the Rentons, and then after

[1] Leather sandals, largely used in Kashmir.

breakfast pressed on alone, camping for the night by myself at Māshung, 16 miles from our last halting-place. A little beyond Hardās the Drās river is joined by the Soru, which flows past Kargil.

The road, since we crossed below Chanegund and left the Leh road, had become distinctly worse. It was narrower and rougher, and in many places was built out over the river from the face of a precipice. These galleries must have been trying for ponies. They were made of logs of wood, projecting from holes and clefts in the rock, and on these were laid flat broad stones to make the pathway. These were any shape and placed anyhow, consequently there were plenty of gaps between, and how the ponies succeeded in getting over without sometimes putting their feet through I never could make out. Of course there was no parapet or handrail to the galleries, and in walking over one constantly saw, through the gaps in the stones, the river foaming along more than a hundred feet below. As we were done with the snow when we reached Hardās, a riding pony had been hired by Renton for his wife, who had her own saddle of course with her. It was wonderful to see the ground that animal went over without a trip or stumble. The track led in many places across masses of boulders loosely flung together, yet that pony climbed up one side and down the other without making a mistake, and Mrs. Renton sat him with a confidence her husband and I were far from sharing, in places where a fall would have meant broken limbs, or worse. Constantly the track was on the edge of a precipice, where a shy or a trip would have involved certain death, but the little beast

went calmly on, as indifferent to the danger of his surroundings as if he had been moving over an extensive plain. Mrs. Renton's courage was astonishing. It was only when the path became less than 3 feet wide, and steeper than a staircase, and was made up entirely of loose blocks, with perhaps a high rock to the left and a sheer drop of several hundred feet to the right, that she would consent to get down.

The villages we passed that day were, like nearly all in these valleys, entirely isolated from each other. Each consists of a cluster of flat-roofed houses, with terraced cultivation[1] as far as the water on which the village depends can be got to go. The terraces, to make them level, are built up with stones at the lower end, the wall thus formed supporting the earth. Looked at from the opposite side of the valley they present a most curious appearance, as the built-up edges are alone visible, and would cause any one, unacquainted with the facts, to suppose that the hamlets consisted of nothing but stone walls.

The water is obtained from a ravine, sometimes lying close to, sometimes, as at Hardās, many miles away. The irrigation system on which that village depends derives its water from a ravine about 4 miles off. The stream is conveyed over the terraces by a network of pretty little canals, clear as crystal, running in channels with gravelly beds, and intersected here and there with tiny waterfalls. Apparently the only limit to the extension of cultivation is the supply of the precious fluid that may be available. All through these Himalayan valleys, in Bāltistān as well as in Ladāk, the principle

[1] See illustration of Himmi village, p. 361.

is the same. Where a stream can be tapped to supply irrigation there we find a village. Where such streams are not, or cannot be tapped, we have rocks and granite dust. Very charming and peaceful these villages looked. After walking for miles and miles without seeing a green thing of any kind, nothing but terra-cotta crags and sand in all directions, it was a great relief, on turning a corner, to see trees and fields and houses forming an oasis in the dreary waste.

At Hardās, and for several marches beyond, the fields had only been just sown, and the fruit-trees were not in bud even. But as we descended, and the climate became more genial, we found in each village we came to spring further advanced. In the earlier ones the apricots were breaking into flower, and the corn was just showing itself above the ground. Further on the trees were in full flower and the corn a foot high, till on reaching Sarsal in the Haramosh district, I found the mulberries beginning to ripen, the apricot fruit formed, and the corn well up to the knee.

A couple of miles before reaching Māshung, the stream formed by the combined Drās and Soru rivers falls into the Indus, the waters of which, instead of being clear as those of the Drās river had been, were a sort of turbid green, with melting snow and the *débris* brought down by avalanches. My tent was pitched on the flat terrace of an unsown field, high above the Indus. The evening was damp and drizzly, and after looking over and oiling my guns, I was glad to turn in early.

The next morning I was up at 3.15 A.M., and left in the dark. We stopped at Tarkutta to change coolies,

and I took the opportunity to have some tea. About noon we reached Bagicha, the road having been a very hilly one, involving many ascents and descents of hundreds of feet each. The distance measured on the map is no guide to the time any particular journey in these hills may take. For instance, on the map, the distance between Māshung and Tarkutta is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, while it took us over two hours to cover the ground. This was owing mainly to an ascent and descent of perhaps 1000 feet, which had to be negotiated soon after leaving Māshung to avoid a precipitous bluff over the Indus. Similarly on the map, the road to Bagicha from Tarkutta measures but little over 8 miles, yet it took us nearly four hours to traverse, the hills were so many, and some so trying.

This day's march was not a pleasant one. There was too much climbing and descending, and the bits along the sands of the Indus were very hot. Some of the galleries along precipices were particularly perilous, and certainly no fourfooted beast of burden, except a Kashmir hill pony, could have traversed them in safety. Indeed, in no other part of the world that I am acquainted with would such a track as we followed have been called a road.

But I was soon to see roads, compared to which that which I had traversed that day was in safety and gradient a railway track. Chānd, the tiffin coolie, gave me a good idea of a Kashmiri's views on the subject of roads. Speaking of the Leh highway, and extolling its excellence, he said it was so good that a man could go along it even at night!

At Bagicha my lui was spread in the cool and shady verandah of the local mosque, and I sat down with my back against the door, while I wrote letters and waited for Ramzāna to bring breakfast. The flat-roofed cottages of the village, which lies but little above the Indus, were around me, with numbers of apricot-trees not yet showing signs of blossom. In front, on the opposite bank, rose the usual terra-cotta and slate-gray crags, absolutely destitute of a particle of vegetation. To the left, at the extremity of the gorge, was a snow-capped mountain, a huge mass of dazzling white in the brilliant sunshine. Immediately to my right was a lovely little mountain stream, clear as crystal, which almost put me to sleep with its pleasant babbling sound. Here I rested till about 2.30 P.M., and then walked on, after changing my boots, to Kharmang, about 3 miles by the map, and nearly two hours by time.

This changing of my boots I found very useful for keeping the feet in good order, when marching on tracks not encumbered with snow. In the morning, when it was generally cold, I wore ordinary English shooting boots, with ice screws in the soles. These I took off at breakfast, and allowed my feet to cool. When starting again I usually put on a pair of chaplis, with leather socks over my ordinary ones. Chaplis are cooler than boots, and the change prevents the feet being chafed. The tiffin coolie carries in the lui the foot-gear which is not in use.

We got in early to Kharmang, about 4.30 P.M., and as coolies had to be changed, resolved to stop for the night. The Rentons, who had made a double

march from Olthingthang—a wonderful bit of endurance on Mrs. Renton's part—arrived about sundown, and there was some difficulty the following morning in arranging for the large number of coolies required for the double party. Though I was up at 3.15 A.M., we did not get away till three hours later.

A five hours' walk took us 10 miles to Tolti, where we breakfasted while the coolies were changed. On the way we passed through several villages, with the long lines of poplars, which are so often seen, both in these oases by the Indus and in the neighbourhood of Srinagar.[1] Here, too, the barley and wheat were above the ground, and the apricot-trees white with blossom. At Tolti, tired of the monotonous walking, I hired a pony, and occasionally rode him on the 12-mile stretch to Parkutta, where we camped for the night in an apricot grove, arranging with the headman to have ready for us in the morning the number of coolies we should want. There was no difficulty about carriage here. Indeed, many of the coolies appeared in the evening, and, after their peculiar custom, put their ropes round our boxes, so as to secure for themselves the particular loads they wanted.

At 3 A.M. on the morning of the 7th I was called as usual. The procedure was the same every day. I dressed by candle light, and then went outside and sat down, with my back against a tree, while my tent was struck and its contents packed up. A fire was always lighted near my tent, for light as well as warmth, the first thing in the morning, and I generally sat down near

[1] See illustration on p. 15.

it so as to see to eat my chota hāzri. This usually consisted of two or three hard-boiled eggs, a few cold chupatties left from the preceding night's dinner, and (till I learned that tea was better) a couple of cups of cocoa and milk. By the time it was finished most of the loads were ready, and often some had started.

By 9.15 we had done the 11 miles to Gol, and as usual had breakfast while the fresh coolies were being brought. Then, having had a couple of hours' rest, we went on, and about 3.30 P.M., after a little over four hours' walking, reached Thurgon, about 12 miles further. Here there was some difficulty about fresh coolies, and we had to halt, though I was anxious to get as far as Skardo, about 9 miles beyond. That night we all dined together, for the last time as it proved afterwards. Indeed, I did not, as it happened, meet the Rentons again till I reached Leh early in July.

CHAPTER V

APRIL 8-12—THURGON TO GARMPANI

Jebb passes us—Tehsildar of Skardo—Starting to race—Komara—Tsurri—Major Hewat—Ponies sent back—Bad going in the dark—Gorbidas—Long day's march—Meaning of "road" in Bāltistān—Ladders—Narrow part of road—Rondu—Rope bridges—Start on ponies—Bad going—Local pipes—Major Morland's coolie—Bridge at Tāk—Malupur—Dangerous track—Shongus—Garmpani—The hot spring.

The next day, the 8th of April, was an eventful one for me. Getting up as usual at three, I learned from Abdulla that Jebb, the gunner whom I had left behind at Bāltāl, had just passed through with three ponies, and was therefore ahead of us. It looked then as if racing in earnest had begun, so I pressed on as fast as possible to Skardo, and resolved to leave the bulk of my luggage to be brought on by Ramzāna, and to go on ahead by forced marches with Abdulla alone.

We arrived about 7 A.M., and I found Jebb seated with the Tehsildar, and trying to arrange about ponies to take him on. He had recovered very quickly, he told me, and as soon as he got clear of snow, had left most of his baggage behind, and come on with his bedding and one shikāri. He had made forced marches and thus

had succeeded in overtaking us. When at Drās I had telegraphed to the Tehsildar of Skardo, asking him to have transport ready for me when I arrived, and in consequence I found that two ponies and some coolies had been collected; while these were being brought, we drank some China tea which the Tehsildar had prepared for us, and which had reached him, he said, *via* Lhassa. It was made by pouring boiling water on a spoonful of dry tea, placed in the cup out of which it had to be drunk. It was refreshing, but the tea-leaves floating up while we drank were troublesome. Sugar was provided, but no milk. A handful of dried apricots, locally known as kabānis, and the commonest fruit in these parts, completed the repast.

The Tehsildar told me that three sportsmen had left Skardo a few days previously, bound for nalas beyond Rondu, and as I knew vaguely that Haramosh lay in that direction, my heart sank at the prospect of finding it occupied. There seemed, however, still a chance, and I resolved to do my best to overtake those in front.

I found a newspaper awaiting me, but no letters, and posted those I had ready. The post usually gets through to Srinagar in six or eight days, the time depending on the amount of snow on the Zogi Lā.

As soon as the fresh coolies and two ponies arrived, I said goodbye to the friendly Tehsildar and to Jebb, for whom transport was not yet ready, and set off for the ferry-boat by which the Indus is crossed. It was necessary to get to the right bank of the river, as the track by the left bank to Rondu, the next place we were bound for, was said to be exceptionally bad. I reflected afterwards, that if it was worse than that on the

right bank, it must be a curious misnomer to call it even a track. The Rentons had not arrived when I left, so I missed seeing them. They went, I afterwards learned, to one of the Shigar nalas, and there got ibex.

When we reached the far bank I opened out some of my loads, and selecting a couple of cooking-pots, two pillows, two blankets, a sleeping bag, a towel, socks, boots, spare chaplis, a tin of bacon, a tin of jam, some tea and sugar, my brief bag, the canteen and the tiffin basket, got Abdulla to make up a couple of light loads. One he placed across his own saddle, and the other and smaller one was attached to mine; for we had obtained saddles with the ponies, intending to ride them as far as possible. Chānd and one of the permanent coolies, Mahamdu, were directed to follow as fast as possible, with nothing but what they required for themselves.

About 11 A.M. Abdulla and I started, leaving Ramzāna in charge of the other loads, with instructions to come along after us as fast as possible. We kept the ponies at a sort of jog-trot wherever the road was at all practicable. About 1 P.M., after covering some 13 miles of ground from the Tehsildar's house, we stopped at the village of Komara and got off our ponies for breakfast. While one of the villagers looked after them, another brought wood, and also lent us a large pot, in which the shikāri boiled a couple of eggs for me, and made some tea for himself and the two permanent coolies, who reached us about an hour later. The remains of a fowl cooked for the previous evening's dinner, which Abdulla had brought on, and a few

chupatties left from the same meal, furnished a breakfast, and about 2.30 P.M. we set out once more.

Seven miles in distance and two hours in time brought us to Tsurri, usually the second stage from Skardo. Here we found a gunner, Major Hewat, encamped, to whom I introduced myself, and with whom, over a cup of tea, I had a pleasant half-hour's chat. He told me that a Major Morland and a Mr. Bond (a sapper) were ahead of me. The shikāri meantime arranged for the purchase of some flour, and got a couple of boys to come on with us to bring the ponies back, and two men to carry the loads when these animals had been returned, for he knew, it seems, that we could not take them many miles further, and their regular attendants, who had come on with us from Skardo, were now, they said, too tired to go on.

Shortly after five we were pressing on once more, but the track was getting worse and worse. I had already had to lead my pony in several places. One of these was especially bad, being a slope of loose shale which had slipped down from above, and in which one's feet sank up to the ankles. A stone dislodged here kept rolling—it seemed for minutes—and then fell plump into the Indus below. By dusk even Abdulla acknowledged that the ponies could do no more, and transferring the loads to the two coolies we had brought, we sent the animals back in charge of the boys. Chānd and Mahamdu had overtaken us at Tsurri, so we were a party of six when we left the nags.

For a time we got on all right, though the track was only here and there distinguishable from the surrounding

country, for there was daylight to help. But when this failed, and we found ourselves feeling our way in the dark, in a chaotic wilderness of rocks and boulders, the position was not an enviable one. There was no question about the general direction. We had the Indus below us on the left, and the steep hillside above on the right. The point was to keep as much on a level as possible, and avoid climbing if it could be done. There was a sort of a track which the two Tsurri coolies endeavoured to keep to, but in the starlight this was practically impossible. In one place the men all took off what they wore on their feet, to clamber the better up a smooth rock, which I had great difficulty in climbing with my boots on. We only got up by holding on to cracks, which we had to feel for in the dark. In another place we had to cross a frozen snow slope, filling a small ravine. Another time we descended too low, and only knew it when we felt the sand of the Indus under our feet. If firewood and water could have been found anywhere together, we should have halted under a rock for the night. A couple of hours' slow progress like this brought us at last to the village of Gorbidas, where we arrived about 9 P.M., having taken some four hours to cover the 5 miles that separated us from Tsurri.

The villagers quickly lighted a couple of fires for us, one for the men to cook by, and one for me to eat by. The latter was made near a bit of smooth grass under an apricot-tree, and here I spread the lui and over it the strip of waterproof sheeting which was round my bedding. Then came the sheepskin sleeping bag and the two blankets, and my bed was ready. While Abdulla

grilled a fowl I undressed by the light of the fire and got into bed, all the time watched with much interest by the village ladies, who sat on their door-steps or on the roofs of their houses. Then after having my dinner (about 10.30 P.M.) I lay down and was asleep in no time.

That day's journey was a tiring one even for me, but it was a wonderful performance on the part of Chānd and Mahamdu, who had walked every step of the way. The actual distance, measured on the map, comes to well over 30 miles, but considering that scarcely any of the road was level, that much of it involved hard climbing, and that it had taken some thirteen or fourteen hours of travelling to cover, it gives a good idea of what a Kashmiri can do in the way of walking when he chooses to try.

I have remarked on the difficulty of the road above, but the word "road" has a peculiar significance in Bāltistān. In Assam, where I served for many years, there are, it is well known, two classes of roads—those which can be distinguished from the surrounding country, and those which can not. The latter class exists only on the maps of the Public Works Department. The tea-planter and the Assamese cultivator do not acknowledge these roads. But in Bāltistān the word "road" constantly, indeed I might almost say generally, means, even amongst the Bāltis, a thing which cannot be distinguished from the surrounding country. I have often stood at the edge of an expanse of several acres of broken rocks, and inquired where was the road. "There," would be the unhesitating reply, as my informant pointed across the chaos in some one direction. Of course there was no

vestige of a track visible, but travelling in the direction indicated, there would occasionally be found here and there a few rocks, the jagged edges of which might be considered slightly worn, indicating that footsteps had perhaps traversed them somewhat habitually. In other places a small pile of stones would be found erected, at varying intervals, to indicate that passing them was the ordinary custom of travellers in that locality. Practically it comes to this, that in Bāltistān a "road" means any ground ordinarily used as a thoroughfare, along which an active man can move without breaking his neck.

On the morning of the 9th we were up before daybreak, and I dressed by the light of the camp fire near my bed, watched as before by an interested circle of villagers of both sexes. The road for a time was fair, but we shortly came to some bad parts, where ladders had been placed to render progress possible. It was a new idea to me, to find a ladder forming part of a Government road. Such places generally involved regular climbing with hands and feet, and it was a wonderful sight seeing the coolies, even though lightly laden, getting along. In some places the road had been built out from the edge of the cliff, much after the fashion of the galleries described above. The width varied considerably. Usually it was about a couple of feet, but sometimes much narrower. One gallery I measured was only 9 inches across.

The narrowest part of the road that I saw was, I considered, worth making a note of. I had climbed to the top of a ladder in one place, and was clawing the smooth rock above, standing on the topmost rung, looking for a place to go to next, when I saw a narrow

gallery some 5 feet off to my left. There was not exactly a precipice under me, but a slip would have involved a drop of some 10 or 12 feet on to a sharply shelving rock, down which the victim of the catastrophe would have proceeded, unpleasantly fast, till he went over its edge, and fell, a couple of hundred feet or so, either into the Indus or on to the broken rocks beside the water. I noticed this from where I stood, and then perceived a ledge about 2 feet to my left, about 3 inches wide, and on a level with the top rung of the ladder. Evidently this was the stepping-place to the gallery beyond, and using it as such, I got across in safety, but I had never seen a "road" attenuated to a width of 3 inches before. Some distance further there was a rise by a zigzag of about 1000 feet, to cross a precipitous spur, and then, after a stretch comparatively level, a sudden descent of quite 1500 feet to the edge of the Indus. This was a sharp drop down ladders and almost perpendicular rocks, and involved using the hands almost as much as the feet.

Here at the village of Bagicha we changed coolies, and then had about the severest ascent of the whole journey, for we must have gone up quite 2000 feet, and had to do it under a blazing sun. The cold wind from the snows around and above us tempered the heat somewhat, but the climb was very severe.

That evening we arrived opposite Rondu, which lies on the left bank of the Indus, and having to go there for fresh supplies and to arrange for a change of coolies, we crossed by the rope bridge. The track takes the traveller to some precipitous rocks overlooking the Indus, down

which he gets by a series of frail-looking galleries and ladders, till he reaches the point, some 50 feet over the river, at which one end of the rope bridge is attached. The opposite end of this bridge is considerably higher than that on the right bank, consequently the passenger finds that he has to begin going upwards before he is at all half-way across.

As rope bridges are peculiar structures not very well known, it may be of interest to describe in some detail the one below Rondu. The ropes of the bridge were attached to a horizontal beam which lay behind, that is on the land side, of three upright beams or logs, kept in their places by being buried in a large mass of loose stones. There were no holes in the rock for the uprights to fit into, probably because the making of such things was beyond the power of the villagers who put up these bridges. The strain of the bridge kept the horizontal beam tight against the three uprights, to which it was not fastened in any way. The ropes were made of strands of birch twigs, plaited together in the ordinary three-plait, each strand being about as thick as a man's wrist. There were three main ropes, one for the footway and one for each hand. The footway rope in the Rondu bridge consisted of five strands, and the two side ropes of four each. The three ropes were connected, at intervals of 7 or 8 feet, by a single strand running from one hand rope down to the footway, round which it was wound once or twice, and up to the other hand rope. At intervals of about 10 yards a piece of forked stick, about 3 feet or so long, was placed between the hand ropes to keep them apart. Over these the passenger had to step as he

THE TWO ROPE BRIDGES AT URI (p. 6).

progressed. The bridge sagged down in the middle to within 30 feet or so of the water. Unless there was a wind it did not sway much, and the danger of crossing was more apparent than real. Though the structure looked very flimsy when viewed from a distance, its immense strength was evident the moment the traveller arrived close. I had never crossed one of these bridges before, but found no difficulty in following the shikāri over. That night I slept between three large rocks above the Rondu village, and before lying down arranged with the Thanadar for a couple of ponies and a change of coolies for the next morning. The distance we had covered that day is under 17 miles on the map, but the march was a very severe one.

I was called about 5 A.M. on the morning of the 10th, and found that the last night's fire near my bed had been replenished, and was burning brightly. I had seen it well scattered the night before when lying down, for fear sparks should come on to my bedding, which for the sake of warmth and light had been spread very close to it. The morning was raw and cold, and I was glad of the heat it imparted, and the light it gave to dress by. Day had broken by the time my clothes were on, and after chota hāzri, the shikāri mounted one pony and I another, and followed by the two permanent coolies and two village men with the loads, we started. There was no need to have got these ponies, for they were only able to go about 2 miles, when we came to a rope bridge, a little lower down the river than the one we had crossed by the previous night. By this we crossed back to the right bank of the Indus, and as before, Chānd, the tiffin

coolie, had to be helped. For a man who had travelled much in these parts he proved exceedingly bad at going over dangerous ground, and had a holy horror of rope bridges.

The track on the opposite side involved a good deal of climbing up difficult rocks, and along ledges projecting from the sides of precipices, as already described, but we made fairly steady progress till 11.25, when, finding a stream which was clear and not the colour of pea-soup with melting snow water, like most of the side streams below Skardo, we stopped to breakfast.

I was amused here by the manner in which Mahamdu made himself a pipe. He prepared some mud, and kneading it together, built with it a small mound over a twig, which he then drew out, thus leaving a channel. One end of this he opened out into a cup and filled with tobacco. Over the other end he placed a bit of his lui, and after lighting the tobacco, went down on his hands and knees and sucked the smoke up through the lui. It did not look a comfortable way of smoking, but apparently it is the usual method on the Indus, for a yard or so from where Mahamdu made his, I saw another pipe of similar construction. Two coolies, on their way to get work at Gilgit, passed us while we were there. They sat down to have a drink at the stream, and noticing the ready-made pipe on the ground, produced tobacco and a match, and had a smoke just after Mahamdu's fashion. The Tandstikkor is the ordinary match used by the Bāltis.

Shortly after leaving the breakfast place we met a post coolie belonging to Major Morland, one of the two

sportsmen ahead of me, and learned that his master had taken the Baralungma nala, and that the other sportsman, Mr. Bond, was going on to Haramosh. As this was our objective it became doubly necessary to hurry on now. The coolie informed us that Mr. Bond had spent the previous night at Tāk, the regular stage from Rondu, and was going to halt that night, the 10th, at Balchu, going on the following day to Shongus, on the 12th to Garmpani, and on the 13th to Sarsal, the first of the Haramosh villages. The sportsman who reached Sarsal first held, I had been given to understand, the whole of the Haramosh shooting, and if Mr. Bond arrived there before me I was aware that I should lose the object of my hurried march.

We reached Tāk about 3 P.M. The track crosses the river at the mouth of the ravine by a very precarious bridge, far worse, I thought, than any of the rope bridges I had seen. The village is some distance up the ravine, and I sat down on a big boulder, and waited while Mahamdu went up to try and get fresh coolies to change the Rondu men. While waiting, I examined the bridge I had just crossed, which was built on the cantilever principle, like most of the bridges of Kashmir. From the bank at either side of the stream, and about 12 feet above the level of the water, projected three or four big beams, the river ends of which were free, while the landward ends were weighted with blocks of heavy stones. The free ends of the two trestles thus formed were some 22 or 23 feet apart, and on them rested three logs, not fastened in any way to each other or the trestles, but simply kept in their places by their own weight. These three logs were not over-thick, and bent down a

good deal when I stepped on them. The river below was a raging torrent, snow fed, turbid and thick, tearing along amongst heavy boulders, and looked violent enough to dash to pieces any unfortunate who might happen to fall in. When going over, I had to put my feet across the division between each pair of logs, so as to get my weight on both, for I found that one log by itself bent too much to be safe. The three logs together made a pathway some 2 feet wide. They had been roughly planed, so as to form an approximately even surface on the top, but the evenness left much to be desired.

There being some delay in getting coolies, I told the shikāri to stay behind to bring on the loads, while I walked on with Chānd, so as to get some distance further before night came down on us. The first mile involved a heavy climb up from the Tāk river. Clouds meantime had gathered, and drops began to fall at odd intervals. This opened up a pleasing prospect, considering that night was coming on. There were no villages near, and we had no tents, and did not even know where we should get wood and water. However, nothing more than a drizzle began, and through this we walked steadily, till about 5 P.M. we came to a small stream, where we found signs of camping and the traces of a deserted village, formerly known as Malupur. The stream being clear, and there being a few trees about, we resolved to camp here for the night, so Chānd went up to prospect for wood, while I swept a place clean under a tree for my bed, and then gathering my waterproof cape about me, sat down philosophically in the drizzle, and awaited developments. The road had been so bad, involving such

climbing up and down, and we had been delayed so long at Tāk, that the distance we had covered since dawn only measures on the map some 18 miles.

About half an hour after we got in the shikāri arrived with the coolies, and Chānd presently turned up with a goatherd he had found on the hillside, each carrying an armful of wood obtained from the latter's hut. The drizzle continued, but we had now got wood and water, and other things troubled us little. The goatherd made a fire near the place I had swept clean, and while he kept up a blaze, the shikāri and I made my bed by its light. The waterproof sheet was put over, not underneath on this occasion, and I quickly undressed and got into bed, piling my clothes up under my pillow to keep them dry. By this time Chānd had lighted another fire, and very soon the shikāri brought me my dinner of soup (made during the previous night and brought on in a bottle, with a rag stuck in the mouth to prevent loss), half a grilled fowl, one potato, one onion, chupatties, and jam, which I ate by the light of the fire, thankful that the drizzle had not yet turned to rain. I had put the head of my bedding against a tree, and after dinner the fire died down, and I leant up against the tree in bed wrapped up in my cape, and listened to the drip from the leaves on to my waterproof sheet, and the muffled roar of the snow-fed Indus that came up from the dark valley below. After half an hour or so of this I lay down, and pulling the waterproof sheet well over my head, was quickly fast asleep.

The morning of the 11th dawned dull and cloudy, but without rain, as I sat on a stone having my tea and eggs,

while the men packed up the bedding. About 5.30 A.M. we were in motion once more, and about noon reached the mouth of the Balchu nala, where Bond had camped the night before. Here we stopped for our usual mid-day halt. On the way we met one of Bond's coolies going back to Skardo for his letters, and learned that he was only on three months' leave, and would not be able to spend more than a month on his shooting ground. Bond was obviously only a short distance before us, and there seemed no doubt now we should overtake him.

The track in places was uncommonly bad. At one point the coolies put all their loads down, and carefully felt their way round a mass of precipitous shelving rocks, which they seemed not to know quite how to negotiate. Then they went back, picked up their loads, and while the path they should follow was fresh in their minds, went past the dangerous part. It was indeed very nasty going here and there, with an almost sheer drop of a couple of hundred feet or more into the Indus below. Later on the path ended at the foot of a perpendicular rock, some 50 or 60 feet high, and I found we had to swarm up its face by a series of tiny ledges. A few miles beyond this we came to a sloping rock, round which we had to get by cracks and very small projections. The Kashmiris, and even the Bālti coolies took off their foot-gear to get over this place, and Chānd had to be helped by the others. I threw a stone into the Indus from this spot, and by the quarter second rule made out the drop to be over 400 feet.

About 5 P.M. we descended to the river bed to avoid a bad climb over some high cliffs, and turning a corner

suddenly saw the green oasis of Shongus before us, and about 2 miles away. Some black spots near the place were shown by the glass to be coolies with loads, and we perceived that we were in sight of Bond's men getting into their camp. Shongus is about 17 miles from Malupur.

The question then arose what was to be done. If I went on I should either have to race Bond for the Haramosh nala next day, or agree to divide the shooting with him. If not I could stay where I was on the sand, and then getting up about 3 A.M. pass Bond's camp in the night, and making a forced march reach Sarsal by the evening of the 12th. This, however, did not seem straight, and, moreover, I had by this time gathered from Abdulla that there was enough shooting in the Haramosh nalas for two guns. Further, Bond was on short leave, and could not occupy the ground for more than a month at the outside. So all things considered I resolved to go on, and shortly after walked into Bond's camp, and introduced myself, greatly, I am afraid, to his disgust.

After some conversation and consulting between our respective shikāris, we settled that the fairest thing to do was to see the ground when we got to Sarsal, and then after dividing it into two, toss for choice. Bond kindly offered to lend me a small spare tent of his, but there was no need to trouble him for it, as my bed had, I found, been made on the grass under an apricot-tree, and there did not seem much chance of rain. It was wet, however, during the night, but I had my waterproof sheet over my bedding, and was none the worse.

The next morning we were off shortly after daybreak. Shongus was a deserted village, but the apricots and

poplars which its former inhabitants planted still flourished in spite of neglect. The stream which was used for watering its deserted fields was still running in its artificial channels, fed by the upper waters of the snow torrent, which tumbled into the Indus down a steep and rocky gorge a short distance below.

The track from Shongus to Garmpani passes over a very lofty ridge immediately north of the site of the former place, and it was about 10 A.M. when we reached the top, wet through with the exertion, and chilled by the cold wind that met us there. A heavy mist was also drifting in our faces as we entered the plateau at the top. There, seeing some snow in a nook, which meant that water for tea was procurable, and plenty of wood being about, we stopped to breakfast. It was a very cold, raw meal, wet as we were, with that horrible mist wrapping us in; but there was no water procurable, we were told, till we reached Garmpani, many miles away, so we had to stop.

After breakfast the descent began, and a most wearisome journey it was, and not till about 2.30 P.M. did we arrive at Garmpani. This place is named from a hot spring (garm = warm, pani = water) which bubbles up from under a rock, beside a stream of clear cold water, which also joins the Indus at this point. There is no village here, and no timber, and our coolies gathered wood where they could on the way down, and brought it in. The distance done was about 8 miles.

A more desolate spot than this for a camp it would be difficult to imagine. The camping ground was a mass of broken rocks, tumbled about anyhow by the river, with

a few stretches of sand here and there. On the opposite side of the stream rose, almost straight up from its edge, the precipitous crags which here form the north-eastern face of the Burme Range. To the north-west lay the barren rocks which led to Sarsal, amongst which the Indus had carved itself a path. To the east lay the Garmpani gorge, its upper end thickly clothed with pines and cedars almost to the tops of the ridges, where the snow lay thick and deep.

The loads were a long way behind, so I sat down on a rock and amused myself writing and doing a chess problem for some time. Then rain came down, and we curled ourselves up under rocks. About 4.30 P.M. the coolies turned up. Bond's tent was soon pitched, and he kindly lent me his small spare one, with a single fly and ridge pole, and about 6 feet square. With difficulty I found a piece of sand large enough to pitch the tent on, and scooping a hollow made my bed therein.

Then as the rain had stopped, I went off to the hot spring and washed my feet, while one of the coolies operated on my soiled clothes. The water was just hot enough to prevent one from keeping one's feet in it for more than a dip in and out. This was very refreshing, and the prospect of a clean shirt and handkerchief and socks was most cheering. As I was pretty tired and sleepy I did not dine with Bond, but went back to my tent, got into bed, and called for dinner at once. In a short time afterwards I was fast asleep.

CHAPTER VI

APRIL 13-19—GARMPANI TO BURME

Sarsal—Tossing for choice of nalas—Map of the Great Bend of the Indus—Sarsal Fort—Chess-board—Start up the Burme—The mid-day halt necessitated by the habits of ibex and markhor—View from Burme Range—Camp at the snow-line—Bedding—First stalk after markhor—Bad shot—Markhor in afternoon.

I WAS up in the dark as usual on the morning of the 13th of April, more from habit than necessity, and started before six o'clock. The going was very bad for some time, as the rocks were slippery with the night's rain, and the ledges in many places very small. After a while, however, the path became easier, and occasionally was quite good.

About 8.30 A.M. we came in sight of Sarsal, the first village of the Haramosh district, and the cultivated land was a pleasant sight, as we had seen none since leaving Shongus the morning before. The usual lines of poplars and apricot-trees distinguished it, that ornament so many of the villages in Bāltistān, and between them the green fields and shingle-covered houses made a pretty picture, contrasted with the brown rocky desolation all round, and the sombre green of the old pines in the gorge above.

About 10 P.M. we entered the village, having covered some 6 miles, and as a drizzle had begun, we selected a shady tree each, and proceeded to discuss our breakfasts.

About twelve o'clock we went out towards the north-west to get an idea of our shooting ground, and the two main nalas, which send their waters into the Indus within a short distance of each other, were pointed out to us. These are known as Jutyal and Khaltar. They were partially visible from where we stood, and we agreed to toss for them. My shikāri told me to choose Khaltar if I won the toss, so as to be able to get on to the nalas to the west towards Gilgit. Bond tossed and I called "heads," and the rupee turned up "tails." Turning to his shikāri Bond said, "I have won, which nala shall we have?" and the man promptly answered "Jutyal." So Bond took Jutyal, and we were both satisfied. By the time we got back to where we had breakfasted our things had come in, and choosing a nice piece of grassy field near a clear bubbling stream, I had Bond's little tent put up, and as it rained pretty steadily the rest of the day, I was very glad of the shelter it afforded. The quarter-inch map of the country round the Great Bend of the Indus (Indian Atlas Quarter Sheet 27 A.N.E.) gives a somewhat wrong impression of the tract it represents. No doubt the course of the river, and the high peaks, Haramosh and Deobani and others, are correctly given, but the contouring of many of the nalas is wrong, and nearly all the villages, including Sarsal, the principal one in this district, are omitted. The half-inch map which accompanies this book is more accurate. The course of the Indus, and the positions of the great peaks, principal valleys, and well-

known places such as Bunji, Rondu, etc., having been plotted from the Indian Atlas on to a blank sheet, I marked on it, as correctly as was possible from an eye sketch, the sites of the villages and nalas along the route I travelled. This map, therefore, though not mathematically accurate as far as these are concerned, will serve, better than the Government chart, to render my movements during the next few weeks intelligible.

That afternoon the Munshi of Darsu (a village up the Jutyal nala) came to our camp, having heard of our arrival. His name was Bāhar Shah. He was a sort of superior headman, and exercised a modified kind of authority over the lambardars of the different villages in the Haramosh district. He had come to help in the matter of supplies, and my various parwānas were shown to him with much ceremony by the shikāri. He quickly produced a messenger to go to Bunji, which I was told was the nearest post-office to Sarsal, and one day's march away. So I gave the man my letters and a telegram, with which he was to start in the morning. The Munshi proved of much assistance all the time I was in his neighbourhood, and spoke Hindustani curiously well for a native of these secluded valleys.

The morning of the 14th was wet and gloomy, and it rained or drizzled practically all day. Bond went off to his nala after breakfast, and I lay in the tent and was lazy. Having left guns and everything that I could possibly do without behind, there was nothing for me to do till my luggage came up. Abdulla bought a sheep for Rs. 3,[1] and mutton was therefore once more

[1] This was the usual price I paid in Bāltistān.

available. Luckily the rain did not come through the tent, so I was comfortable enough.

The 15th was a lovely day, clear, cool, and sunny, so I sat on a stone, leaning up against a poplar, and wrote letters most of the time. On the mulberry-tree above my tent the fruit had fully formed, and some of it had even begun to ripen. The apricots had shed most of their blossom, the poplars were in full leaf, and the corn was in some places two feet high. Close to my tent was a structure which I was told was the Fort, and I examined it with much interest. It was built of water-worn stones, loosely set in mud, on a knoll of rock overhanging the Indus. It was a curious misnomer calling it a fort, seeing that its walls could be pushed down with the hand, but it looked picturesque on its elevated position, and was used, I was informed, for storing grain.

On the afternoon of the 16th my things arrived, and I was glad to see them and the cook again. There had been difficulty, Ramzāna said, in getting coolies, hence the delay.

The 17th I also spent at Sarsal rearranging my things, for Abdulla recommended crossing the river and going up the Burme ridge just opposite, to look for a markhor, before trying Khaltar and the nalas on the right bank of the Indus. Khaltar was a much higher and colder nala than Jutyal, he said, and the snow would for a while longer be too deep. The Cabul tent he proposed to leave behind, with everything else which could possibly be spared, as the ascent was steep and the going bad. There being no water anywhere on

the Burme, it was necessary to camp at the snow-line.

So I made the necessary arrangements, and settled to go with only about half a dozen coolie loads. The bulk of the things were to be left behind with Jamāla, one of the permanent coolies, viz. : the Cabul tent, camp bed, table, easy chair, blanket mattress, paragon stool, and a couple of yākdāns [1] with stores. In fact, everything which could possibly be dispensed with. The things to be taken with me were, two 30 lb. tents, bedding, rubber tub, canvas wash-hand basin and wooden stand, waterproof sheet, one yākdān, one box of tea and sugar, guns and ammunition, and a couple of kiltās of stores and kitchen things.

In the afternoon I took out the carbine and tried a few shots at 150 yards. It seemed to shoot high, and I was not particularly pleased with the results. On the way back, taking the Paradox, I picked up a couple of blue rock pigeons out of a flock which was circling near the tents, and in the evening and after dinner (now that I had candles once more) got out my chess-board and amused myself with problems.

A small, portable chess-board [2] is a wonderful blessing to a traveller whose luggage, owing to difficulties of transport, must be limited, and who cannot therefore carry much literature. It is light, and with a book of problems takes up little space. It is a continual source of interest and pleasure, and a delightful change from writing, which is about the only other amusement (if it can be so called)

[1] Mule trunks.

[2] I got the idea of the chess-board from Mr. Norman's book, *The People and Politics of the Far East*, in which it is very highly recommended.

which is available for his leisure hours to a traveller without books. I had hardly any books, and but for the little chess-board many an hour, after dinner, or on a hillside waiting for ibex to move out of some inaccessible spot, would have hung very heavy on my hands.

On the morning of the 18th, having engaged a local man called Zāru to act as chota shikāri, we left Sarsal, and, crossing by the rope bridge, went up the ridge on the other side of the Indus. On our way we suddenly started a herd of some thirty markhor (all females and young males), who were lying up in a hollow. They were about 150 yards off when we came on them, and as they were the first I had seen, I examined them with some curiosity. They looked uncommonly large, and were certainly the finest goats I had ever beheld. About 10 A.M. we halted for the usual mid-day rest—a custom necessitated by the habits of the game we were after.

Ibex and markhor seem only to move morning and evening. During the day they lie, in cover, or under rocks, or on snow, usually in some inaccessible spot, far up on the ranges amongst which they are found. They go downwards in the evening, for the sake of such grazing as the barren mountains they frequent produce, and which is naturally best at the lower elevations. In the mornings they graze their way upwards again, to the places they occupy during the day. Here, while the others sleep, one or two of the herd carefully watch the hillsides below them, ready to give the alarm at the first appearance of danger. Consequently they cannot be approached from below at all. And from above they are almost equally hard to reach, though for different reasons. Ibex

delight in snow, and usually get as far up as possible—so far, indeed, that it is generally a practical impossibility to get above them. Markhor do not like snow, and seldom go higher than the snow-line, looking for crags and rocks at that elevation. It is therefore possible sometimes to get above them, but the ground they select is usually so precipitous that nothing can be done, and they are practically as safe as ibex when lying up for the day. Such being the habits of these two species of goat, the mid-day halt became a necessity, and the morning and evening were alone devoted to searching the hillsides.

There were some cedars where we stopped that day, and a dry one, suggestive of firewood, had determined the choice of the spot. The cook, with the seven or eight baggage coolies, was behind, so Abdulla, who with Chānd and Zāru had alone accompanied me, cooked my breakfast. When the meal was finished, I leaned back against the tree under which I was sitting, and considered the wonderful view before me.

Right in front lay the Jutyal nala, visible almost to its head, where the stream which flows along it rises under a huge glacier, below a semicircle of five snow-clad peaks, every one of which is over 21,000 feet high. The highest of these, a giant, rising 24,486 feet above the sea, was called Deobani by the men with me, although an entirely different mountain bears that name on the map. A green patch in this valley marked the position of Darsu, a little oasis in the barren waste of rocks and crags. I could see the green of the cultivated fields, but it was too far to distinguish the water or hear the sound of the stream. To the left of the head of the

nala, and about 11 miles off as the crow flies, was the rounded summit of the mountain called Deobani on the map—20,168 feet above the sea—exquisitely white in the brilliant sunshine and clear air. To my right, about 12 miles off, rose the sharp and lofty peak of Haramosh, 24,285 feet above the sea, and about 15,000 above where I lay. From about my own level, up to the apex of the glittering pinnacle, the whole was a mass of dazzling snow. The hoarse sound of the Indus, as it rushed round the Great Bend formed by the foot of the ridge where I sat, was the only thing I could hear. But it was not till I thought of what was immediately beyond the snow fields around me, that I realised how far away I was from civilised lands. The snowy summits of the five giants who guard the upper end of the Jutyal nala looked down, I knew, on the towns of Hunza and Nāgar, so little known till our expedition of 1891. Nāgar, the nearer of these two, was not quite 28 miles in a bee-line from where I was. Behind me—hidden by a shoulder of the ridge—was Bunji, on the Gilgit road, about 13 miles off, and directly to my left, concealed behind the spur which runs down to the junction of the Gilgit and Indus rivers, lay Gilgit itself—some 22 miles away. So I was almost at the edge of the map, for the quarter-inch survey on which the Indian Atlas sheets are based stopped a few miles short of Gilgit on the west, and of Hunza and Nāgar on the north.

While we were there the coolies passed us, and about 3 P.M. we went on ourselves and camped at the snow-line. The snow was lying about in pockets and corners of the hill, but the more exposed parts of the ground were bare.

A fairly level place was with some trouble prepared, by digging earth out of one side of the hill, and piling it up just below, and on this my tent was pitched. It was all damp earth, wet with melting snow, but I did not mind, for I had a large brown waterproof sheet which covered the floor of the tent, and on one side of this my bed was made. On the other the mule-trunk and a small box of stores were arranged. The Bālti coolies made themselves quarters under a sheltering rock, and, lighting a large fire, were soon comfortable. The cook and shikāri and four[1] Kashmiri coolies settled themselves in the second tent, in front of which Ramzāna was soon cooking my dinner.

It was very cold and raw as the evening closed in, and as I could not keep myself warm outside, I got into bed about six o'clock, and soon after called for my dinner. I found this arrangement so satisfactory when I was travelling light, that I always adopted it, and regularly got into bed to have my dinner. Before undressing I used to get out and place within reach everything I was likely to require, and pull down the flap of the tent next my bed. The pillows being against the bamboo pole at the doorway, I used to lean up against them, and with abundance of bedding was very warm and comfortable. Plenty of bedding is a necessity for a camp near the snow-line, and I was well off, for I had a white drugget and four folds of blanketing to go next the ground, a sheepskin sleeping bag on that, and two blankets and an eider-down quilt over all. My dinner used

[1] Out of seven permanent coolies one had got sick at Mataiyun, and was left there; another got snow blindness, and had to be left at Skardo; and a third was at Sarsal looking after my things.

to be brought to me by one of the servants, and placed on the floor by my side, and when I had done, he would fasten down the second flap of my tent with stones. A couple of candles standing on the yākdān to my left gave enough light, and I used to read (when I had anything to read) or write, or do chess problems, for an hour or so after dinner in considerable comfort.

THE SOWAR'S PĀL (30 LBS.) USED IN BĀLTISTĀN.

On the morning of the 19th Abdulla called me before daylight, and in the gray dawn I sat on a stone by a fire outside the tent, and had my chota hāzri, shivering with cold. The water in my canteen was frozen when I got up, and of course the ground outside was as hard as rock.

The evening before, three or four markhor had been seen from the camp going downwards, and it was hoped that they would return the same way. In this expecta-

tion we were not disappointed, and soon we saw a small herd coming up, grazing slowly. They were a good distance off, but with the glasses we could make out two males and four or five females. We started downwards —Abdulla, Zāru, Chānd, and I—all wearing grass shoes. We had taken to this foot-gear again, now that we were amongst rocks on which it would not do to slip, and engaged in work which required moving without sound. The herd was coming up, not straight towards the camp, but to the south of it. Consequently we had to move to our right to intercept it. Abdulla had the .303, and the local man the Express. Chānd carried the tiffin basket, my bag, and some spare grass shoes. A series of more or less parallel hollows and ridges here ran downwards from the crest of the main ridge towards the river, and it was up one of these hollows, fortunately with the wind behind them, that the herd was coming. Every now and then one or two of them would stop grazing, and carefully examine the hillside above. Soon we were near enough to distinguish the two males with the naked eye, and caution became necessary. As long as we were in the hollows, diagonally across which we were going, it was easy enough. It was getting over the ridges which had to be carefully done. When we reached the hollow immediately preceding that in which the herd was, Chānd and Zāru remained behind, and Abdulla led the way, with me alone after him. Lying flat, we crawled over the next crest, and slowly slid down the opposite side. The herd was below us, but a sort of small ridge occupied the centre of the hollow, and, concealed behind it, we

discussed what should be done. The herd might go up either of the two slight hollows on each side of the small ridge, so we settled that we should try to get on to the middle of the rise, so as to be able to fire both ways. If, then, the herd came up by either small hollow, we should have a chance, but if it came up the centre we were sure to be seen, and should probably only get a long shot. Lying flat, we started to worm ourselves up the middle ridge. Two or three of the herd were in sight as we did this, and each time one of them looked up we lay still. The smaller of the two males was about 500 yards away, and, with a couple of females, was approaching cautiously, looking up every now and then, and inspecting the hillside carefully as he advanced. How we escaped being seen I do not know, for we were in full view of the smaller male most of the time. At last we got up to the top of the ridge, which was fairly wide, and found that none of the herd were on the far side. By going a little distance further on, we got almost out of sight of the smaller male, so, lying flat on our backs, we began to wriggle down the hill. In a few minutes we got as far as we could venture, for the slope appeared to begin to drop suddenly, and we were afraid, if we went on, that the others, who must, we knew, be somewhere about the bottom of the descent, would see us. So we lay still and exercised our souls in patience. Presently the male we had sighted grazed his way up to a point about 150 yards off, and then lay down! I could hardly breathe as I lay on my back, and saw a markhor deliberately settle himself within easy range. The horns looked small, but

Abdulla whispered that they were large enough, and as I did not know then what shootable horns should look like at that range, I accepted his opinion, and looked on that markhor as already bagged.

Meantime we were in hopes that the others would come up the small hollow to our right, but when half an hour passed and there was no sign, Abdulla's characteristic defect of impatience began to show itself. If I had known as much about the habits of markhor then as I have learned since, I should have been aware that the bulk of the herd was then close to me at the bottom of the ridge I was on, and that if I only waited I should be certain of getting a shot at the large males when they again began to move upwards. But Abdulla was too impatient, and urged me to fire at the markhor before us. So, after some hesitation, I took the .303 and slowly raising myself to a sitting position, took deliberate aim. I was of course then in full view, and had the markhor looked round, he could not have failed to see me. But he continued gazing down the valley, and gave me a capital broadside shot. But the excitement (I suppose) was too much for my steadiness, and to my dismay I missed! The moment the sound was heard, the markhor I had aimed at jumped up, and started off down the hill; at the same moment the rest of the herd emerged from its concealment at the foot of the small ridge, and began going at top speed down the slope. The larger male was with them, and a fine fellow he looked as I sent a couple of bullets after him, loading rapidly from the magazine. Then they turned a corner and all was over.

Those who have missed an easy shot at a beast they have travelled some hundreds of miles to secure will alone appreciate my feelings as I turned to follow the disgusted shikāri up the hill. Curious to relate, he attributed the miss to the little rifle, not to me, and said that if I had had the Express, I should have secured that markhor. The little rifle, he said, was much too small to be of any use, and I must certainly use the larger one the next chance I got. I was too sick to argue with him, and so, rejoining the other two men, we proceeded further up the main ridge, going slowly and examining the hillsides with our glasses as we went. I had two pair of binoculars with me, and greatly regretted that I had no telescope. One of the binoculars was a very good glass and had cost twelve guineas, but though excellent for a general search, it was not good enough to show the size of the horns of an animal over a mile or so away. A really good telescope is wanted for this purpose, and I resolved to send for one.

At 10.30 A.M. we sat down for the mid-day halt as usual, and after breakfast, about two o'clock, Abdulla and Zāru went to different points from which a good view was obtainable, and sitting down began searching the hillsides closely. About half-past four Abdulla beckoned to me, and when I got up to him, said—"I have found good ones at last." Raising the glasses to five yellowish spots which he pointed out on an opposite hill, and looking carefully I perceived that these were markhor grazing their way down. "But how do you know," I said, "that they have good horns?" "By the colour," he replied. "An old markhor is always

light yellow in colour. Besides, the old males are at this season seldom with the females, but go about together in small herds." The markhor were too far off for us to do anything towards intercepting them then, but as they were pretty sure to come upwards in the morning along pretty much the same route, we felt confident of seeing them again, and turned back with our minds much relieved. On reaching camp I found that the Kashmiri I had left behind sick at Skardo (one of the permanent coolies) had arrived with my letters and papers. So I had plenty of reading to occupy me after dinner. That night I wrote to Merewether to get me a telescope if possible.

CHAPTER VII

APRIL 20-26—BURME TO SHUT

Markhor again seen—Long wait watching—Stalk—Bad ground—First markhor shot—Three big ones go off—Mistakes made—Small head—Three markhor seen—And lost—View of Deobani and Haramosh—Changed camp—View of Gilgit—Camp by Indus—March to Honuspa *via* Sarsal—Shut—View of Gilgit valley—Markhor seen—Long climb down—Second markhor killed—Horns smashed—Long climb back.

I WAS wakened before dawn on the 20th of April by hearing one of the men making a fire outside my tent, a thing I was very glad of, when half an hour later I was sitting beside the blazing wood having my chota hāzri. It is one of the comforts of shooting in Bāltistān, as compared with similar work in Ladāk, that firewood is plentiful and of the best quality in the former country. Pine or cedar is what is usually burnt, and either, especially the latter, makes an excellent fire, bright and warm and with little ash.

Leaving word for the camp to be brought on near to the place, higher up the main ridge, where we had had breakfast the day before, Abdulla, Chānd, Zāru, and I went on ahead, and after a couple of hours or so sighted the markhor again. We saw them from a

small ridge that stood out from the main range, which here made a bold curve inwards, enabling us, from where we stood, to see plainly a very large amount of ground. The markhor were about the same level as ourselves, and were grazing about in a sort of small corrie filled with snow, at the foot of very precipitous rocks. Following the inside of the curve the animals would have been some 3 miles away, and if we could have gone along, keeping to the level we were on, the approach would have been simple, as the wind was blowing straight from them to us. But here the hillside was a series of precipices, for we tried to get at them in this way, but soon found it impossible to proceed. Then we thought of going up the main range, and dropping down on them from above, but the glass soon showed us that the precipice under which they stood could not be descended without ropes. It was impossible to go past them above and then, descending, go at them from the far side, because the wind would in that case have at once revealed our presence. The only other way was to attack them from below, but this was also impossible, as there was not enough cover and we should have been inevitably detected. There was nothing for it, then, but to wait till they moved into a more accessible position, and we accordingly resigned ourselves to watching them.

The herd consisted apparently of the five we had seen the previous day, three good sized and two younger males. They were evidently quite unconscious of danger, for one or two of them were lying down, and the remainder grazing about. There were a few cedars near them, and

a stretch of snow in a gully close by, and occasionally it looked as if one of them was eating snow. Every now and then a markhor would get up on a rock and stand motionless, gazing down the hillside for minutes at a time, showing clearly that there was no chance whatever of approaching from that direction. After an hour or so of this, we resolved to get breakfast over,—so, lighting a fire in a secluded hollow, we discussed that meal, every now and then going up to see whether the herd had moved or not. After breakfast we resumed our watch, and in about an hour found that only one of the lot was in sight, the rest having retired either in amongst the cedars, or over ridges that we could not detect from where we were. In a short time after, the last markhor disappeared into a hollow on the far side of the corrie, and after carefully examining the ground to make sure no watchful sentinel was still in sight, we (Abdulla, Zāru, and I) started downwards for the stalk. The ground was uncommonly bad. Again and again we were turned back by precipices there was no getting past, for between the ridges running down there were big fissures in many places, with perpendicular sides, and too wide to be jumped. So we had to descend quite halfway to the Indus before we were able to travel at one level, along the inside of the curve formed by the range. Eventually we found ourselves pretty nearly under the corrie in which our game had been last seen, and then we began going up. The ground was loose shale, fairly steep, and dotted over with the small, sage-like aromatic bush which wild goats are so fond of. It was hard work, and I was fairly exhausted when we reached the

corrie. Here we stopped to recover breath and to slip a couple of cartridges into the Express. Then taking off his cap and going as noiselessly as possible, Abdulla crept forward up the ridge. Peering over for a minute, he got up and went on, and we followed him across a small hollow. Beyond this was another ridge, soon after crossing which he suddenly sat down and, bending back against the hillside, beckoned to me to come on. I slid up to him, and he pointed downwards and said, "Markhor." Following his indication, I saw a markhor lying some 70 or 80 yards below me, and looking straight up at us. Evidently he had seen our faces, but could not quite make out what they were. I could not see his horns properly, and inquired if he was big enough to shoot. Abdulla said "Yes." So taking aim with the Express, I fired, and the markhor went rolling over and over down a steep, stone gully. "His account has been settled," said Abdulla, as several markhor started up from different rocks and bolted down the hillside. I fired the second barrel at one of these without effect, and then exchanged the Express for the Lee-Metford.

Three markhor had been lying above us, and these had meantime darted up the hill, and were now standing looking at us from about 250 yards off. I fired at one of these and missed, and then had a couple of running shots, the last of which seemed to take effect. Thinking one weapon would be enough, I put the .303 on the ground, and sending Zāru after the wounded markhor, Abdulla and I started up the hill with the Express. We went as hard as the ground and our wind would let us, and a terrible ten minutes of it we had, climbing over big cedar logs,

and round rocks, creeping along ledges, plunging through snow, going upwards all the while. By that time we were utterly done, and could only lie panting on a ridge, while about 400 yards off, at the edge of a ghastly precipice, on a ledge that seemed only a few inches wide, stood the three markhor. Obviously all were uninjured. Very fine they looked as they stood with their heads turned toward us, evidently aware that they were perfectly safe. We watched them for a bit, and then climbed on to the top of the range above them, to see if there was any way of getting at them from there. If I had had the Lee-Metford with me when I saw the three on the edge of the precipice, and had known its capabilities, I might have bagged one of the big goats, but I did not know then, as I learned afterwards, that nothing inside of 500 yards is really safe from a sportsman with a .303 in his hands.

The Burme Range runs nearly north and south, and we were on the side facing to the east. On this face there was comparatively little snow, but on the top, and for a good way down the western face, the snow was deep. Seeing no signs of the markhor, and knowing that the local shikāri would get the aid of some men from a sheep fold not far down the mountain, and bring in the rifle and head next morning, we turned towards the camp along the crest, and got in a little before sunset, pretty well tired out. The camp was on the eastern side of the range, in a sheltered hollow free from snow, with plenty of dry wood lying about. An artificially level place had been prepared, and on this my tent had been pitched.

There were two mistakes made in this day's work. One was caused by the impatience of Abdulla, who did

not advance with sufficient caution, and let himself be seen before he detected the markhor. I afterwards found that this was his principal defect as a shikāri, and that he was apt to fail in giving his employer a shot at a beast that was unconscious of his presence. The second was due to myself. I ought not to have fired when I did, but should have sat still and waited. The markhor, which had detected us, could not make us out, and would presently have got up and given the alarm. The rest of the herd would then have come out from concealment, and stood about looking for the danger, and I should have been able to pick out the best animal, for the whole lot must have been in range from where I was, and if I had waited I should almost certainly have done much better.

The following morning (the 21st) Zāru arrived with the markhor's head, and I found to my great chagrin, that the horns were only 25 inches, and the animal should never have been shot. I was very vexed with Abdulla, who should have known better than to let me fire at so small a beast. That day we had no luck. Shortly after leaving camp we sighted three markhor, most probably the three we had lost the previous evening. They were slowly going upwards, apparently towards some precipitous rocks not far below the crest, so we went by the track we had followed the day before, in order to get above them and climb down. This necessitated losing sight of them, but we marked the rocks they were going for, and thought we could get there all right.

The climb down was worse than we anticipated, and

almost too much for Abdulla, who was not, I found, at all a good cragsman. One place he said to me was impossible, and went round another way himself, but I got down without much trouble. He seemed to have no idea of how to use his hands in places where it was necessary to cling on all one knew, and on more than one occasion had to get Zāru to help him. Chānd was left at a convenient spot above while we went down.

Our climb, however, was to no purpose. We hung down over the rocks, and peered into every nook and cranny that was visible, but saw nothing of the markhor. So about eleven we climbed back and had breakfast where Chānd was, and waited for evening. But the markhor never showed, and the only way I can account for their disappearance is by supposing that they got our wind and made off. We made a mistake, too, in taking our eyes off them while they were in motion. We ought to have seen them settle themselves for the day before we started in pursuit. We could then have marked down the particular rocks under which they lay.

The sunrises and sunsets about this time were peculiarly magnificent. The five giants at the head of the Jutyal glacier were glorious objects as the sun broke upon them each day, brilliant peaks of exquisite whiteness, backed by the peculiar deep blue of the sky at these altitudes. In the evenings Haramosh peak was the special object of interest, lighted up as it generally was by the setting sun. The view of this magnificent mountain, which I got from the Burme Range, was not, however, equal to that I had daily before me in the Khaltar and Kutyal nalas, for here I saw as

it were the edge only of the peak, whereas when I crossed the Indus I was able to see the full width of its face. All these huge mountains were visible from my tent door, the great glaciers of Haramosh looking so close that it seemed as if I could throw a stone on to them.

On the 22nd nothing was seen but females and young males, so the next day we moved camp to the other side of the ridge, where Abdulla said he knew of a suitable bit of ground. While this was being done we went higher up, to a place then under deep snow, and afterwards down a ridge on the western side. From the highest point we reached the view was very extensive, as Bunji lay immediately below us, and Gilgit was visible, a large green oasis on the banks of the Gilgit river. Not far below the point where this stream flows into the Indus we could just see the suspension bridge which here carries the Gilgit-Srinagar road. There were no markhor anywhere about, so after breakfast we made for the camp, and as it was early had it struck, and marched down to the Indus, so as to get to the nalas on its right bank, which we next proposed to try.

We reached the river about 5 P.M., striking it near some goatherds' huts, and camped on the sand. The village of Honuspa, which we were to go through next day, lay a little higher up on the opposite side of the river, which was here spanned by a single rope by way of a bridge. A man sitting in a loop of rope could work himself across with this contrivance, as we had seen on the way to Bārāmulla, but laden coolies could not cross. This was why the rope was of no use to us, and

we were obliged to make the long round to Sarsal, to cross by the bridge there.

The descent involved a very sudden change of temperature. The preceding night the water had frozen in the canteen in my tent, whereas this night I could not use my sleeping bag, but slept outside it with only a single blanket over me. One of the coolies had dropped the small box in which I kept the tea and sugar in daily use and a few medicines. The box was a bit broken, but I managed to repair it partially, and it worked all right for a time. But a bottle of jwāri hāri[1] had been smashed, and the contents getting into the sugar did not improve its flavour. The sugar, however, was too valuable to throw away, and I reflected that a tonic mixed with my tea would probably be most beneficial.

The next day, the 24th, we did a good deal of marching. In the morning we went back to Sarsal in order to cross by the rope bridge. Word had been sent to my coolie there, in charge of the things left behind, to have the tent struck and the loads ready to come on with us, and picking them up and changing coolies, we marched round the Great Bend of the Indus, down its right bank to the village of Honuspa.

Here, sitting on green turf beside a beautifully clear and cold little irrigation channel, under the shade of mulberry and apricot trees, and with wheat fields all around, in which the corn was half a foot or more high, I had a delightful breakfast on a charming summer's day. It was difficult to realise, as I felt the pleasant breeze, laden with the scent of wild mint, that at the same

[1] See p. 481.

meal the day before the water for my tea was made from snow, and that I had been glad to seek shelter from the cold of the wind.

Here the Cabul tent and spare things were left, and in light marching order as when we went up Burme, we started for the village of Shut[1] further down the Indus. The track was very wearisome, being all over rocks and sand, and involving numerous ascents and descents, to cross the channels worn by small tributaries to the main river. At 6 P.M. we reached Shut, which is situated on a flat spot at the top of a very sudden rise from the plain of the Indus below. Here we camped in an apricot grove.

On the 25th I refused to march till I had had a tub —though my men evidently considered it great waste of time. But there was only a short distance to go, so it did not matter, and we reached a suitable camping ground in the nala above Shut before noon. This time there being no shikāri in the village, we secured a coolie called Sultan Ali, who said he could take us next morning to where markhor were to be found.

Accordingly the following day we were up early and off in the gray dawn. Although cold, it was much warmer than it had been on Burme, for the thermometer in my tent only fell to 39° F. during the night. It took us upwards of an hour and a half, going along the winding curves of the hillsides, before we reached a high bluff overhanging the Indus and within sight of Shut, from which we hoped to be able to see markhor coming up for their mid-day rest to a mass of precipitous rocks that lay to

[1] The *u* in this name is pronounced exactly like the *oo* in foot.

our right and lower down the river. These were just under the crest of the spur which runs downwards to the point where the Gilgit river falls into the Indus.

After some time one markhor was seen a very long way off, and as it was practically certain he would not be alone, we concluded that his companions must be near him amongst the rocks, and at once made towards the crest. For a time we were able to follow the regular path used by the Bāltis, who now repair annually to Gilgit for work, but soon we left this and struck up the mountain. It was about 11 A.M. when we reached the summit, so we had breakfast under some rocks there.

As I sat facing north-west, I could see the Gilgit river come winding through a flat and moderately wide valley, the upper end of which was relieved by the large green oasis of Gilgit itself. Beyond was a dark wall of mountains with the summits crowned with snow. On the left bank of the river I could see the opening in the line of hills, through which ascends the road to Hunza and Nāgar and the Pāmirs beyond. Immediately below me to the left, but on the far or right bank of the Gilgit river, a dark thread-like line, approximately level, showed where the Gilgit-Srinagar road lay. I could see where it descended to the Indus and crossed by the small suspension bridge, and then passed over the level sands of the left bank to Bunji, some distance behind me.

After breakfast we decided to search the face of the precipitous mass of rocks that lay below us, on the off chance of being able to detect the markhor, who were pretty sure to be lying down somewhere about. A small spur, which jutted out a little below and at right angles

to the crest, and sloped directly towards the Indus, enabled this to be done, for by going along it for some distance we knew we should be able to see back into places amongst the rocks, which would have been invisible from above. Leaving Chānd on the top, we crept cautiously downwards. I stopped first, and took up a position near a good-sized rock. Sultan Ali went lower down, and lying flat on his face, began searching the ground below him. Abdulla went on. I was sheltered from the wind, and the warm sunshine was very pleasant, as with the binoculars up I examined the crannies in the rocks before me. Immediately under where I sat, a stone would have dropped for quite 500 feet without touching ground, and it was at once clear that nothing without wings could get up amongst the rocks near the crest. For below them a series of smooth precipices descended, and were lost to view in the dark gullies underneath, but on the opposite side there were rocks to which access was plainly possible from the valley, and I searched these very carefully. At last I made out what I thought was a markhor lying under a rock. It was a long time before I could feel sure, he was so far off, but at last I saw a leg move and then I was certain. But the glass was not strong enough to show me whether he was worth going after or not, and I regretted my folly in not bringing a powerful telescope.

Just as I was getting up to go in search of Abdulla, he turned up with his face streaming with perspiration, and said he had seen a markhor amongst the rocks below, in a place where a shot was possible. I showed him the animal I had noticed, and then we started downwards.

When we came to Sultan Ali we found him curled up under a rock fast asleep! Waking him—not over gently—we went on. The descent was very difficult, for not only were the rocks steep and the footing insecure, but it was necessary to move without noise, as a rolling stone would probably have been fatal to our chance of success. We were also in full view of the markhor I had noticed, and though he was so far off that we could only just make him out with the naked eye, we could not be sure that he would not detect our moving forms on the ridge. In places the rocks were nearly perpendicular, and we had to let ourselves down with our hands, and feel for crevices with our toes as we hung. In other places there was sandy clay with shaly stones imbedded in it, and these constantly gave way and started to roll down, when we had to clutch convulsively at them, or call in an agonised whisper to the man beneath to stop them. Many a stone that looked likely to fall we picked up and put into a position of safety before passing on. Presently we came to a slope that was in full view of the markhor I had seen, to which we were now of course much nearer. For some time we sat behind a rock, partly to recover wind, partly to decide how the slope was to be attacked. It was rather steep and sandy, and there was no way of going round it. Apparently the best way was to slide down on our backs one at a time. With much trepidation I saw Abdulla glide over the edge, and work his way, feet foremost, down to the hollow below without disturbing a stone. I followed on my back with my heart in my mouth and my eyes fixed on the markhor, ready to stop dead if he moved. Little by little I scraped my way

down, and very thankful I was when I found myself once more hidden from view behind a friendly rock. Sultan Ali came last, and he also, by great good luck, escaped being seen.

As we were now, Abdulla whispered, close to his markhor, Sultan Ali was left behind, and taking only the two rifles, we crawled out on to a comparatively flat rock which here projected over the gully below, and lying flat, peered over its edge. After a little time I made out a markhor, of fair size, lying under a rock about 350 yards away and nearly straight below. He was near the floor of a very steep gully which came from somewhere high to our left, and ran down almost to the Indus far away to the right. Moving on to another place, we saw a second and better markhor, a little below the first one, also lying under a rock, and every now and then scratching his quarters with the tips of his horns. From his being able to do this I concluded he was a fairly good beast, and whispered to Abdulla that we must get lower down for a shot. Just as I said this the goat stepped down into the gully and began grazing. I looked at my watch and saw it was only 1.30, much before the time that markhor usually think of starting for their evening graze. It was very bad luck, as I was pretty sure of being able to get reasonably close if the animal had remained where he was, and now I might have to follow him a long way.

However, there was nothing else for it, and we continued going down. Soon we arrived opposite the place where the markhor had been, and saw that the smaller one had left his perch also. To ascertain this we had had to come to the edge of the gully, and we looked to

see if there were any way into it from our side, as it was evident the goats had gone down it. But there was not —nothing but perpendicular walls of rock below us—so we had to return to seek some other route. We were now some distance below the markhor I had originally seen, and knowing that there were two, if not more, much nearer to us, we paid no further attention to him.

It was necessary to be expeditious, for the goats, we knew, might not find sufficient grazing near, and in that case would go down fast. But it was impossible for us to travel fast amongst the precipices by which we were surrounded. Several times we had to turn back from some rock to which we had cautiously climbed, by finding that beyond it was a sheer drop which nothing could pass. Abdulla was of little use in this ground, and I had generally to lead the way.

One place we came to was particularly difficult. There was a V-shaped cleft in the rocks, forming a kind of long shoot before us. It was very steep, and the slabs of rock that met at the bottom of the shoot were perfectly smooth. We could not see what was at the far end. If it was a precipice we were done, as the return up the shoot, unaided, looked almost impossible. Carefully, but rapidly, we examined the rocks around, but could see no other way down, so knowing there was no time to lose, I said to Abdulla that we must do it, and got into the shoot. Lying on my back and holding on to the Express with my left hand, I slid slowly down, my weight keeping me partly jambed in the cleft where the two slabs met. At the bottom I sat up and peered over the edge, and seeing that we could climb down, beckoned to Abdulla to follow.

A few minutes later we reached a rock which projected a good deal from the side of the hill, and going to the edge, saw a herd of about six or eight markhor in a part of the gully where some patches of the sage-like bush grew. The animals were almost immediately below us, and within range, but seeing some rocks lower still to which I thought we could get, we went on to them and found ourselves within perhaps 150 yards of the herd. I felt, however, exceedingly doubtful of this, partly because I did not know accurately the size of these goats, and partly because I had little idea of how to estimate the distance of an object almost straight under me. It appeared best, however, to fire from where we were, as the herd was evidently feeding its way down, and might take us to some place where we could not possibly get within range. I could not find a rock on which to rest the rifle, but saw one against the side of which I could lean while I fired, so getting close to it, I looked down at the herd to pick out the best animal. This appeared to be an old goat which was quietly grazing across my line of view, and sitting down and taking, as I thought, a careful aim, I fired.

The markhor aimed at turned round quickly and ran back to the left towards its comrades, and as it did so I gave it the second barrel. "Missed!" said the shikāri. Disgusted at the mess I had made of a good stalk, for the animals were absolutely unconscious of my presence when I fired, I went off as fast as the ground would let me towards the gully, in the direction of which the goats were now scrambling. Getting to its edge and looking down, we saw the herd going across it and

up the following side. Taking the .303 I sat down and aimed at the leader, who was walking slowly up the hill, and who could not have been more than 150 yards off. But I did not wait long enough to recover my breath, and firing hurriedly, missed. The herd now set off fast, but the ground was so fearfully bad, that even these sure-footed beasts could hardly go faster than a walk, and I knew I should have time; so waiting to recover breath I aimed again, and as the leader had gone round a rock, fired at the second goat.

This time the shot told, and the markhor tumbled headlong down the precipice. He fell clear, about 70 or 80 feet, and went with a smash into the rocks at the bottom of the gully. From these the body rebounded, and then went in a series of big rolls and jumps, down the excessively steep floor of the gully till it disappeared from view round a bend. "What bad luck, utterly smashed!" said Abdulla, as I looked ruefully at the gorge, down which a regular hailstorm of stones was following the dead markhor. I did not see how the horns could escape that fearful fall, and I was very vexed at the bad luck which seemed to attend me. Here I had knocked over a decent markhor, and the only part of him I wanted was probably lying smashed into pieces some hundreds of feet below. Thinking I could get to the animal, we climbed down to the patch of grazing the herd had been on when I first fired, calling out to Sultan Ali to follow us. There were no traces of the horns anywhere there, and Abdulla and the other went lower. From a projecting rock they called out to me that they could see the markhor a long way below, and that they

would go down for what they could find and return to camp by another route, suggesting that I should climb up to where Chānd was, and go back with him. I had left my knife and belt near the rock shoot, and had to get them, or I should have been tempted to go on with the two men.

As it was I turned back (it was then just 3.30 P.M.), and had a very hard climb up. The marks we made coming down saved me much time, but did not help me near the shoot, for it was impossible to go up that, owing to its steepness and smoothness, and I had much trouble in finding a way round. Eventually, however, I got up, found my knife and belt, and rejoined Chānd on the top of the crest. We arrived in camp soon after dark, about 6.30, and Abdulla and the local man turned up half an hour later.

They had discovered the body of the markhor smashed almost to pulp by the fall. The horns had been broken off close to the head, and had not been found. The head itself had been so banged about that none of the bones were whole, and it was not worth bringing home. The shikāri had brought the skin of the head, and arranged to send men back next day to look for the horns, on the off chance that they or bits of them might be found. It was exceedingly bad luck altogether, and I went to bed feeling very depressed indeed.

CHAPTER VIII

APRIL 27-30—SHUT TO HONUSPA

Herd of four markhor—Magnificent view—Third markhor shot—Horns of second markhor found—First red bear—Herd of eight ibex—Inaccessible—Shelter in cave—Cold.

On the 27th of April we had a rest, which I signalised by a tub, and in the afternoon went a short distance up the nala to look for ibex. We saw three, but they were noticed too late in the evening, and were too far off then to allow of our getting up to them.

The next morning (28th) I went again to the markhor ground overlooking the Indus, accompanied by Abdulla, Chānd, and a Shut coolie named Dingo, who had taken the place of Sultan Ali, sent to hunt for the broken horns. After a long search we detected a buck thoughtfully inspecting some precipices. Thinking we could get down to him, we went towards the place, keeping well above it along the edge of the hill. When we arrived we saw four markhor, all males, coming up towards us from their night's grazing on the banks of the Indus. I lay behind a rock and looked at them carefully through the binoculars. All seemed to me shootable

heads, and Abdulla agreed, but I could not form any accurate idea of how long the horns were. The goats were evidently prospecting about for suitable quarters for the day, and it was most interesting watching their cautious movements, and noticing the care with which they examined all the ground above and around them as they advanced. They looked very handsome, with their black chin tufts and hoary beards and massive horns, and I thought myself in great luck that I had sighted another herd so soon. They were very slow in coming forward, so I lay on the grass in the bright sunshine, quite sheltered from view, and watched them at my ease.

The surroundings were very fine. In front and right below us was the Indus, looking quite narrow in the distance, a dirty blue in colour except where masses of rock broke it into foam. I could see it from a little below the Great Bend to my left, all the way through the valley beneath, to where it was joined by the Gilgit river, from which point it flowed through a wide plain, to where the green oasis of Bunji contrasted pleasantly with the sands around. In front and beyond the Indus was the Burme Range, where my camp had been a few days before, the snow on its top receding daily further up towards the wooded crest, beyond which the jagged summits overlooking Astor glittered in the morning sun. To the left, not yet veiled in the mists which often obscured it during the afternoon, the magnificent peak of Haramosh stood out in the pellucid air, brilliantly white and dazzlingly near, against a background of the deepest blue. To the right rose, straight above Bunji, the enormous mass of Nanga Parbat, 26,629 feet above

the sea, its dome-shaped summit looking colossal, as it shone above the clouds climbing slowly up the snow fields on its sides, nearly 40 miles from where I was. On all sides the view was bounded by ranges of mountains deep in snow, with high white peaks rising above the line here and there. It was a glorious panorama, and I had ample time to admire it, as I lay at full length on the edge of the hill waiting for the markhor.

Soon the leading goat disappeared under a ledge of rocks some distance below, and as I did not see him emerge, I concluded he had lain down for his mid-day siesta. Two others presently went off to the right, and the fourth stood inspecting the rocks about him with great care for a long time after the others had gone. At last he also seemed to make up his mind that there was no danger to be apprehended, and slowly followed the first buck under the ledge. We waited for a little to see if he would show himself again, and as he did not do so, we prepared to climb down.

There was no way directly from where we were, but a small ridge to the left ran out from the main hill, and down this we proceeded—Abdulla, Dingo, and I. The chief trouble was to move without stirring the stones, as a single pebble rolling downwards would probably have started off both the goats. At one corner it was as much as we could do to get down at all, but we managed it somehow, and a few minutes after stood on the ledge under which the two markhor had disappeared. It was then a little after 9 A.M., and I took the Express from Abdulla's hands. The ledge was a large sheet of rock with a flat top, and evidently hollowed out under-

neath. We went to its edge and peered over, but could see nothing. Noiselessly as we moved in our grass shoes, the markhor must have heard us, for suddenly, as I was going towards the far end, one of them emerged, gave a terrified glance upwards, and then went off as hard as he could travel. Knowing there was another, and hoping that he would give me a standing shot, I would not fire at number one. The next moment number two rushed out, and after going a little distance, turned, and stood for a moment transfixed with horror. He was about 100 yards or so off as I took a quick sight and fired, and then, as I saw him through the smoke going his best, I sent a second bullet after him. He went on apparently untouched, and Abdulla handed me the .303, with which I fired just as he topped a small rise in front. The next moment we heard a clatter of stones beyond the rise, and knew that the markhor was down.

Abdulla rushed off to cut his throat in the orthodox fashion,[1] while the coolie and I followed more leisurely. When we came up, the markhor was lying at the very edge of a precipice. If he had rolled on another two feet he would have gone over, and most probably his horns would have been smashed. He had the marks of two bullets, one on the right quarter, which eventually brought him down, and must have been the first fired, and the other grazing the skin a little more in front. How he went so far with so bad a wound (the bullet had gone right up into his body) I do not know. The size of the hole showed it could not have been due

[1] The meat of an animal shot will not be eaten by Mahomedans unless the throat has been cut by a Mahomedan before life is extinct.

to the .303. The horns though thick were short, only 33 and 34 inches, and he would not have been shot if I had estimated the length properly before firing. The head was cut off, and the body skinned, and then laden with horns, rifles, and meat, we climbed back to the top, which we reached about 11.30 A.M.

MARKHOR (shot on 26th April).

Length, straight line, 31½″ Length on curve, 48½″
Circumference, 11¾″ Tip to tip, 26½″
(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

After breakfast I took a round with Abdulla in hopes of seeing something. Nothing, however, turned up and we returned to camp pretty early.

The horns of the markhor shot on the 26th had meantime been brought in. By some extraordinary good luck they had not, though detached from the head, been broken in any way, and I was delighted to find,

when I put the tape over them, that one measured 48 and the other 48½ inches. This was great luck indeed, as I did not know when I bagged him that I had shot so good a head. The corkscrew sweep was very deep, and this was what took off a good deal from the appearance of length. The head of the first small male I had shot would answer, I knew, for setting up these horns, so I did not altogether regret that day's work.

On the 29th we moved higher up the nala, and camped on a nice little strip of grass by the stream. We searched for ibex, but saw only females and young ones, and Abdulla came to the conclusion it was not worth while staying here any longer, and advocated a move towards Honuspa next day.

Accordingly, on the 30th we sent our camp down through the Shut village to the Honuspa nala, marching ourselves (Abdulla, Chānd, Sultan Ali, and I) round by the hills. We started as usual a little after dawn, Abdulla leading with the Express, and I next. About half an hour after leaving camp, and while we were going along a series of ridges and hollows sloping down to the Indus, I saw Abdulla, on coming to the top of a ridge, suddenly sit down and begin taking my rifle out of its cover. Coming up to him, he whispered, "Bear," and looking over the crest, I saw a red bear about 250 or 300 yards off, coming quietly towards us. He was about the same level as we were, and was moving along the inner side of the curve, and apparently going to cross our ridge, close to the spot we were standing on. Every now and then he stopped to sniff the ground and the air around him. As he was coming very slowly there was ample

time for me to load both the rifles, and to take up a position behind a convenient rock. Resting the Express on the rock, I watched the little beast—he was but a small bear—shambling along.

When he was about 70 or 80 yards off, and had stopped to have a sniff, I thought it would be unwise to let him come nearer lest he should wind us, so taking a careful aim, I fired. As the smoke slowly lifted in the heavy morning air, I heard Abdulla say, "Missed!" Hardly able to believe my ears I jumped to one side of the rock, and seeing the bear making off, I hurriedly fired the second barrel, and then, as he continued his retreat, taking the Lee-Metford, had several shots at his receding form, when he disappeared up the hillside amongst the small trees, bushes, and broken rocks.

Words cannot describe my feelings at that moment. It was impossible to imagine an easier shot, and the men were so astonished they could say nothing. That I should have missed so often, and the first time at 70 yards from a rock as a rest, was nearly incredible, and I felt quite dazed as we all walked down to the path the bear had been on and examined the ground. Presently Abdulla picked up a little piece of bloody brown hair, and then found some drops of blood on the track. Clearly one bullet had gone home somewhere, and we started at once in pursuit, climbing over rocks, and pushing our way through bushes. The blood-marks were very few, and it was evident the bear was only slightly hit. Most of the rocks and bushes that were marked at all showed smears on the left-hand side as we looked at them, and close to the ground, from which we

concluded that the wound was in one of the left feet, probably the left hind foot. In one place the tracks went into a cave, and we thought we had him, but further on we saw them again, and knew that the bear had come out and gone on.

We were following like this, searching carefully for the scratches on the ground and the marks of blood which made up the trail, when the shikāri, who was leading, on coming to a small rise in the ground suddenly dropped as if shot. I instantly concluded he had seen the bear, and crouching low I ran towards him, to be told when I reached him that a herd of ibex was in front. Looking cautiously over the edge, I found that a deep gully running up to the left into the mountains was below us, and in this I saw a herd of eight ibex, with one good male. The herd was moving about uneasily, and had evidently been disturbed by something, possibly by the wounded bear, whose track appeared to lead down to and across the gully in which the goats were. The descent to where they stood was very precipitous, and in some places looked impossible. But we should no doubt have found a way down, only that doing so would have been useless, as we should have been in full view the whole time.

The question then arose as to whether we should follow the bear and let the ibex go, or give up the bear and make arrangements for tackling the ibex. I wanted to do the former, feeling sure we should see ibex again, and not liking to lose the wounded bear. But the shikāri said that the bear would be recovered later on if we sent villagers after him, and that it was a pity

not to try for the good head before us. Considering that he knew more about the probabilities of the case than I did, I reluctantly gave way, and we settled to watch the ibex till they should get into a place where a stalk would be possible.

At first we thought we might succeed in crawling down unseen, and, as there were a few cedars on the steep slope, began creeping cautiously downwards. But we quickly had to stop, for after going a short way, we found that the hillside made a sheer drop of some 200 feet, and we could see no way round the precipice. So we lay where we were and watched the herd about 400 yards off. There were three small bucks beside the big one, and four females, and the lot were grazing about, and gradually edging their way up the opposite side of the gully. Seeing after a time the direction in which they were moving, and being aware that if they got up much further they would see us, we climbed cautiously back and took refuge behind the crest of the ridge.

It was then about ten o'clock. Immediately below where I sat was what looked like a plain, sloping from the foot of the mountain we were on to the bank of the Indus. The distance hid the inequalities, but I knew, from the journey we had made over it, going from Honuspa to Shut, that there was very little "plain" about that arid rocky waste. Far to the left a projecting spur from the range behind me hid the village of Honuspa and the bend of the Indus beyond it. To the right, and some distance below, lay the village of Shut.

By about noon the ibex had lain down for the day on a sandy slope some distance beyond the gully, and were

clearly quite unapproachable. Then we had breakfast, after which the shikāri told me he had put aside some mutton and chupatties for my dinner, as he said it was doubtful if we should reach our camp that night. I did not know where the tents had gone, but he said it was a long way on, and we should have to wait till four o'clock, probably, before the ibex would move. After breakfast I amused myself doing chess problems, and spent a pleasant afternoon, at intervals looking at the herd through the glasses as they lay asleep.

About 4 P.M. it struck us that Chānd might as well be sent to the village of Shut, on the off-chance of his being able to get some eggs and a fowl, and of finding us again before dark. So we sent him off, and then, as soon as the ibex began to get up and stretch themselves, we went downwards behind the ridge, and searched for a way to cross the gully and get immediately below the goats, so as to intercept them.

It was near 5 P.M. when we found ourselves, after a somewhat dangerous descent, in the gully, and the ibex were then in much the same position as they had occupied all day. Evidently they did not propose coming any lower, having probably been frightened by the bear, and it was useless, therefore, to waste any more time on them. Besides it was getting late, and we had to find some place with water near, or else get up to the level of the snow. Where we were there was no water, no snow, and no firewood, but some distance beyond we saw a deep cutting in the rocks, and it seemed probable that it might contain water. But there was no appearance of wood about the place, and a fire was

even more essential than water, as the night was bound to be very cold.

So we went along carefully, and after an unpleasant climb along a shale slope, from which every detached stone went rolling down to the edge of the cutting, and then fell, after an ominous pause, clattering amongst the rocks below, we reached a small stream coming from our left, beyond which was a snow slope forming a bridge over the cutting. No wood was to be found here, but beyond the snow bridge, a long way up the hillside, we saw a pine wood, and resolved to seek shelter for the night there. It was beginning to get dusk as we splashed through the stream and across the snow bridge, the bitter cold water being very uncomfortable as it soaked through our grass shoes and puttoo socks, but wood was in sight, and we knew we should shortly have a warm fire blazing. In less than half an hour we were searching about in the wood for a sheltering rock with snow near it, for there was no stream, and we wanted snow to supply us with drinking water. Towards the top of the wood we found a place where some heavy rocks had tumbled down, in such a way that one large one had remained supported on two or three others, and thus formed a roof.

The sort of cave that resulted from this was a kind of rectangular enclosure, with one of the two long sides open to the air, while the other three were closed in by rocks. One end was full of snow and large icicles; the other end ran narrowing up into the rocks, and though there was no opening visible, I could feel by the cold air which came down that somewhere in that direction there was communication with the outer world. The floor,

though sandy and dry, was covered with what looked like the droppings of bats, and the remains of a fire showed that the place had been used as a shelter by wandering shepherds. While the men were collecting dry wood and cutting grass, I employed myself sweeping clear a place to sleep on. Very soon a fire was blazing on a sloping rock near the entrance. By the light thus obtained I took off my soaking foot-gear, flinging away the worn-out grass shoes, and hanging the socks up on rocks around to dry. The men lighted another fire some distance off, and made themselves as comfortable as they could be with hardly any food and no extra clothing. I spread my lui over the dry grass shaken down on the space I had cleared, put my brief bag at the top for a pillow, filled my canteen with snow from the lower end of the cave, and setting it to melt, got out the bits of mutton and chupatties left from breakfast. Masses of rocks in front blocked the view, but I could catch glimpses of the stars here and there through the cedars outside, and with the cheerful fire blazing brightly in front, felt that circumstances might have been very much worse.

Thinking that hot mutton would be an improvement on cold, I took my frying-pan and proceeded to heat the meat over the fire. But the floor was very uneven near the sloping rock, and tripping over something I dropped the frying-pan, and it and its contents rolled down into the dust below! Obviously there was to be no meat for dinner, but I had five chupatties left, so setting aside two for the morning, I ate three with a little salt and enjoyed them exceedingly. A drink of snow water and a nip of brandy from the flask finished the dinner, and then I

went on with a couple of letters I had been writing, and later on amused myself with a chess problem. All this passed the time well, and it must have been pretty late

MARKHOR (*Capra falconeri*).
(Front view of head on p. 113.)

when I built up the fire with the remainder of the wood and lay down to sleep.

As long as the fire lasted it was comfortable enough, and I was not long falling asleep; but when the heat

died down, and the cold breeze from the upper parts of the cave began to lower the temperature all round, I awoke shivering, and began to wonder how much more of the night I had to get through. There was not enough wood left wherewith to replenish the fire, and the single lui I had over me was not quite adequate covering in that ice-filled cave. I sat up and considered what to do. The cave was not sufficiently high to let me stand upright, and even if it had been, the floor space was not enough to let me walk about. In front of me the big icicles from the roof gleamed in the flickering light of the dying fire, and the snow in the corners and crevices of the rocks shone ghostly white. It was bitterly cold, and I wondered how I was to stand it till morning. Then it occurred to me that I had heard or read somewhere, that if a blanket worn in the ordinary way is not warm enough, pulling it over one's head adds greatly to the heat it gives; so I lay down again and rearranged the lui, putting it over my head and tucking it under the bag. The effect was surprising. I quickly ceased to shiver, and in a few minutes fell asleep and did not awake till morning.

CHAPTER IX

MAY 1-12—HONUSPA TO KHALTAR

Shikāri's tea—Search for camp—Honuspa nala—Ibex near camp—Bad miss—Same herd next day—Difficult stalk—Very long shots—Two ibex bagged—Unsuccessful days—Hard day on the 5th—Moved camp on 6th—Got third ibex—Merg nala—Khaltar nala—Moved higher up on 9th—Heavy rain—Bear skin brought in—Moved camp to side nala—Setting sun on Haramosh peak—Ibex horns found—Small herd with good buck seen—Long stalk—Successful—Fourth ibex—Great vitality of ibex.

The calling of the big mountain pheasants (Rām chikor) woke me at dawn on the first of May, and right glad I was to hear the sound. The shikāri soon came and made up my fire. I divided the remains of my tea and sugar amongst the three of us, and ate up my remaining two chupatties. The shikāri's method of making tea was peculiar. He generally carried an old jam tin in his pocket as a drinking cup. This he now filled with water, and pouring in the tea and sugar, put it on the fire to boil. The men would not use my kettle or touch one of my chupatties.

Then we started for our camp, and had a long trudge through snow, reaching at length the grove of birch-trees, high up in the mountains, to which the shikāri had

directed our tents to be taken. But no camp was there, for we found the ground deep under snow. So we had a weary search for it over the hillsides, and eventually found it about 9.30 A.M. half-way up the Honuspa nala.

When breakfast was over, a meal which was much appreciated after the short commons of the preceding night, Sultan Ali was sent off, with a promise of full pay and a reward of five rupees, to seek for the wounded bear, and Abdulla started up one side of the nala to look for ibex. If he saw any he was to send me word. About 4 P.M. he came back and reported nothing visible, so I took off my grass shoes and proceeded to put my tent in order.

Half an hour later the shikāri came up hurriedly, and said there were ibex close to the camp. Quickly I put on the grass shoes again, and Abdulla taking the Express and I the .303, we started up the hill at the eastern side of the nala. This consisted at the beginning of rather precipitous crags, but we soon got on to slopes where small bushes and cedars were dotted about. In half an hour we came in sight of the ibex. There were some ten or twelve, rather scattered, feeding slowly up the hill.

The best was an old buck with horns that Abdulla took to be 40 inches. He was the best ibex I had up to that date seen. The brown line down his back was very dark, and in marked contrast to the light tawny colour of his sides, and the sides of his neck and legs looked almost black. Evidently he was an old beast. He was the lowest down of all, a watchful female being

ahead, and some distance above the level we were at when we sighted them. They were entirely unconscious of our proximity, and there being so many trees about the stalk was an easy one. By judicious running and crouching, we got up to a tree which could not have been more than 60 or 70 yards from the group of animals with which the big male was. Here I took the Express and crawled past the tree on to a rocky ledge, just over the slope on which many of the herd were grazing. The female leading the lot at this juncture turned round and saw me, but for some unknown reason did not whistle. She stood stock still, staring at me, as I walked to the end of the ledge and sat down.

There I stopped for a minute to take breath and to observe the herd. The buck I wanted was almost immediately below, grazing quietly upwards with some smaller males and one or two females near him. He looked very fine so close, with his horns forming, apparently, more than half a circle. But the fact of having been seen by the female above, I suppose, made me more hurried than I should have been, and the nearness of the animal made me feel certain a miss was impossible. Accordingly, taking a quick aim I fired. Peering through the smoke I was amazed to see the buck still standing and then begin to move off. I hurriedly fired the second barrel, and the ibex all began to run. Taking the Lee-Metford I rapidly fired three more shots, by which time all had disappeared. I felt inclined to shy both the rifles down the rocks and myself after them. It was impossible to have had an easier shot. The shikāri had done his part well, and brought me quite close to the

herd practically unobserved, and indeed right up to the best animal it contained, and I had made a ghastly mess of the whole business. Abdulla looked ready to cry with vexation, and I am afraid his opinion of my shooting, after this display and the miss of the bear the preceding day, must have been very low indeed.

Thinking that possibly something might be wrong with the weapon, I made the men, on the way back, put up a stone, about a foot long and 8 inches wide, at the edge of the stream, and sitting down on a rock above, nearly as far off as I had been from the ibex, I fired two shots at it without any particular aim. Each time I hit the stone plump, so clearly nothing was wrong with either the weapon or the ammunition, and the disgraceful shot I had made was solely attributable to myself. There was not much said going back, but, like the Irishman's parrot, the men must have thought a lot, and I was so wretched I felt inclined for nothing. I had a miserable night, waking every now and then to see that ibex looming up within shot-gun distance, and then to remember that I had missed him.

None of us were particularly happy, I think, when we started, shortly after dawn next morning, for some rocky ground overhanging the Indus. Dingo was with us again, as Sultan Ali had gone after the bear. We went down the nala, and then up the western side to examine some steep cliffs believed to hold markhor. When we were about half-way up, during a short halt, we detected a herd of ibex near the snow-line, and Abdulla said that it must be the one fired at last night, because he noticed an old male which was exceedingly

like the one I had missed, and also because the herd was, contrary to the habits of ibex, up at the snow-line so early in the morning. He could only account for their being so high by the fright they had experienced below. The total number, about ten or twelve, agreed also with that of the herd stalked yesterday.

The question then arose as to whether we should go after this herd or after markhor. I decided in favour of the herd before us, as I wanted particularly to get that old ibex if it were in any way possible. At the same time I knew, that having been scared, the herd would be exceedingly wary and very difficult of approach. Noting carefully its position in the snow amongst some pines, nearly at the crest of the range, we went down to the stream, crossed it, and started for a weary tramp up the hill, along a hollow which would bring us out about half a mile to the north of where the ibex were. When nearly at the top, at 9.30 A.M., we stopped amongst some cedars for breakfast, so as to get it over and have the day free for the stalk. That was one of the most uncomfortable meals I ever ate. I was pretty wet with perspiration after a climb of about an hour and a half, and the cold wind chilled me at once to the bone. To improve matters snow came on, and it snowed steadily for nearly an hour. We were then above the snow-line, and it was uncommonly cold sitting under a cedar waiting for breakfast.

At half-past ten we started for the stalk, or rather to reconnoitre the position of the herd, with a view to a stalk. We went up to the crest and travelled south along it through the snow, till nearly over the hollow

where the herd had been last seen. The wind had so far been favourable, but it was a cloudy day and there was every chance, we knew, of a change at any moment. However, the thing had to be risked, so we crept carefully down till about the same level as the herd, and then went on hands and knees towards a small ridge which separated us from it. From there we could only see two females. Evidently the rest were amongst the pines and cedars around.

Leaving Abdulla to look for the old male, we crawled back, the coolie and I, fearful of being seen ; but the wind just then changed, and the effect was immediately fatal. A few minutes later Abdulla crept back to us, and simply saying, "Look!" pointed to the whole herd streaking across the snow towards a high bluff which rose on the line of the range a little to the south of where we were. Evidently they had winded us and were off, led by the old buck, a regular patriarch, whose horns stood out well against the snow, the sight making me, for the hundredth time, anathematise myself for having let him off when I had him in my power a few hours before. However, we had not so far been seen, and as there was just a chance that we might get a shot from some high rock, if the herd elected to go downwards, we waited till the last straggler had disappeared over the bluff, and followed as fast as we could.

It must be remembered that this bluff was the highest point in that neighbourhood of the line of hills which formed the eastern side of the nala in which my camp lay, and that the herd had gone over the eastern edge of the bluff, and therefore presumably down into

the valley beyond. But Abdulla knew that this was impossible, because the eastern side of the bluff was a sheer precipice, and he calculated, rightly as it turned out, that the herd would be obliged when going downwards, to come partly towards us. When on the crest and within a couple of hundred yards from the top of the bluff, we found a descending ridge running due east, and therefore at right angles to the main ridge we were on. Going down this a little way, floundering through the snow, we saw a few females and small males, a good way below us, crossing a lower and smaller ridge which ran south at right angles to the one we had just come on to, and consequently parallel to the perpendicular face of the bluff. The top of this third ridge was some 300 yards or so from where we were, and I sat down and waited for the patriarch, thinking I should not get a better chance. But he was much too astute to follow the others exactly, and kept below. We went on then to the lowest point we could conveniently get to on the second ridge, and therefore the nearest to the third ridge. This manœuvre was, however, detected by some of the ibex, who then, instead of crossing, began moving south along the side of this third ridge. The old male was the last to come up, but did not see us. He was slowly following the others, grazing as he went, and had evidently quite recovered the alarm caused by winding us half an hour before. I was many times tempted to put up the 300 yards' sight on the Lee-Metford and take my chance, but I was not confident enough in my shooting, and refrained. Gradually the patriarch grazed his way to the top, and then, when the remainder of the

herd had gone out of sight in some of the hollows of the ridge, he actually lay down!

Evidently he was quite unconscious of our presence, so, leaving Chānd, the rest of us instantly got up, and proceeding to the end of the ridge we were on, set off scrambling down to the third ridge, where the ibex was. In about ten or fifteen minutes we were down on the eastern side of it, and going up to the edge I peered cautiously over. The patriarch was nowhere to be seen! This was extremely bad luck, as we had marked him down to a particular rock only a quarter of an hour before, and the wind was still in our favour. Gradually we worked our way along, keeping under shelter of the crest, and compelled to go slowly by the badness of the ground. Still not an ibex to be seen anywhere.

Presently we caught sight of them, and discovered that they had taken the opportunity, while we were scrambling down, to cross the gully that divided the third ridge from the foot of the perpendicular bluff alluded to above. When therefore we sighted them, the whole lot, including the patriarch, were standing on the opposite side of the gully and calmly looking at us. They were, as it turned out, some 400 or 500 yards from us, and obviously considered themselves perfectly safe. Immediately above and behind there rose, what looked like a perpendicular wall of rock, going straight to the top of the bluff. Apparently they were thinking of going up this, as they were dotted about, some on higher and some on lower parts of the rock.

Seeing that concealment was no longer of any use, and that there was a probability of many shots, as the

ibex could not go up that awful precipice fast, or hide anywhere, or quickly otherwise disappear, I advanced openly to a convenient rock, and resting the carbine on it, and putting up the 300 yards' sight, I took careful aim at the old male and fired. Abdulla, who was watching, said the bullet hit below him, so, as the herd began quickly scrambling up, I raised the 400 yards' leaf and had another shot. "Still too low," said the shikāri, whereupon I put up the 500 yards' sight. The first shot with this had no effect, and the patriarch continued to make the best of his way up. He was scrambling into a hollow as I fired the fourth shot, and consequently the whole of his back was exposed to view. Apparently this shot hit him, for he seemed unable to get up out of the hollow, and all the others quickly passed him.

I fired one or two more shots at him as he stood in the hollow, when, seeing he was unable to move, I picked out another male and let drive at him a couple of times, of course with the same sight up. One of these bullets caught him on the hind leg and shattered it. I saw him stop, but could not tell what had happened till Abdulla, looking through the glasses, stated where he was hit. The rest of the herd had by this time contrived to scramble up and disappear, and the question arose how we were to get the two wounded beasts.

It was necessary to see that herd climb, to believe in the possibility of anything that could not fly getting up the face of that precipice. It cannot have been less than 1000 feet from the gully below to the top, and was probably nearer 1500. It looked straight up and down, or nearly so, yet those ibex went up by ledges along the

face, at a canter in some places. It was wonderful to see them.

When all had disappeared but the two wounded ones, we went down the side of our ridge till on the same level as the patriarch, and examined him through the glasses. He was then lying in the niche he had been trying to get up when hit. If he remained where he was it seemed impossible for us to get him, for no man could have climbed to where he lay. The smaller ibex was moving about trying to get either up or down, but the ground was too much for an animal with three legs, and he could do neither. Presently he found a nook to lie down in, and though I fired a few shots in hopes of dislodging him, I failed to do so.

Abdulla looked with respect at the little .303 he had hitherto despised, and said he had never seen a rifle do such shooting before. Both men admitted that they thought I was only going to waste cartridges, when I opened fire at such a range. The ibex too evidently had considered themselves perfectly safe, for many of them, including the old leader, were looking straight at me when I fired the first shot.

Meantime the patriarch was evidently in a bad way, for I saw him two or three times trying to steady himself. But he was apparently unable to do so on the narrow platform he occupied, and presently we saw him slip off it, and sliding down the slope below, go off its edge through the air for some two or three hundred feet or so, strike another slope, down which he went with gathering speed, and then, after a succession of big bounds, land finally in a mass of snow at the bottom. It

almost took one's breath away to see him falling through the air, a clean drop each time between the slopes he touched, and made one realise what a frightful series of precipices were below where he was shot. The horns appeared in some miraculous manner to have escaped, but of course we could not be sure.

Then Abdulla and Dingo started to get them and the skin, and slinging the two rifles across my shoulders I started back the way we had come. Chānd was waiting at the top, and I joined him after a hard, tedious climb. I had no idea, till I was going back leisurely, what a long distance we had come, or how difficult the way had been. In the excitement of trying to get up to game, one does not notice how bad the ground often is.

It was about one o'clock when Chānd and I started back, in a blinding snowstorm accompanied by thunder, for our camp, and about 4 P.M. when we got in. I had to put on a fresh pair of grass shoes on the way, those I had started with in the morning being quite worn through.

I have seldom enjoyed tea as much as I did that afternoon, lying back comfortably on a seat made for me under the cedar that shaded my tent, and looking up at the steep mountain, down whose side I had just come. I had, after all, got the old buck I had missed the evening before, and regained (I hoped) the confidence of my men.

Abdulla came in half an hour before dusk with the head and skin. The points of both horns were gone, and one horn was broken off the head. The longer horn as it stood measured $34\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and I estimated from the appearance that when whole it must have been about 39 inches long. It was very unlucky, as when

unbroken, the head must have been a fine one. The skin showed a tiny bullet wound in the groin, which must have been the fatal shot.

The smaller ibex was not retrieved till some days afterwards, when I sent Dingo and another man to look for him. They found him where he had been last seen by us, and only got the head by letting a coolie down from above, by means of a rope, to the ledge on which he was lying. The horns measured but $30\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The following day, the 3rd of May, we went up the nala and saw two herds of ibex, but the stalk in each case proved a failure owing to the wind. There were no really good heads, however, so I did not mind. The nala we were in was beautifully wooded with pines and cedars, especially on its western side; but this, though charming to the eye, made it a bit difficult to find the game. Luckily ibex do not seem to care much for woods.

On the 4th we went down the nala, and examined some rocks overlooking the Indus, hoping to see markhor, but only females and young males were found.

On the 5th we were out of bed at 3.30 A.M., and by the light of the moon went up a side glen leading west. The early start had been necessary, because there was a good deal of snow to get over, and we wanted to do it before it got soft. Just about dawn we reached the summit — a precipitous rock hanging over the Indus valley — where we were in hopes of coming across markhor. The sunrise on the extensive snow fields of Nanga Parbat was exceptionally fine, as we watched it from the high peak we occupied. But no markhor were to be seen, and the shikāri, who had said this place was

an almost certain find, was much disgusted. The snow *en route* was hard until sunrise, everywhere but in the birch woods, but there the going was bad. Again and again we broke through the upper crust and sank up to our hips, and where there was a slope to get up the labour was very great. Early in the afternoon we turned to come back, and on our way saw the fresh tracks of a bear. These we followed as long as we could, but in the cedar wood on the lower slopes there was no snow, and we lost the trail.

On the 6th the camp was sent up to the top of the eastern ridge which bounded the nala we were in, while I, with the usual three men, went up the stream to see if we could find certain ibex which had been noticed the previous evening on our way back to camp. An hour's walk over the rocks forming the bed of the little river, brought us within sight of the herd, which was grazing close to the place in which we had perceived it the day before. There were two males and three females, one of the former appearing to have a fair head. So we started for the stalk.

The herd was not very far up the hillside, and was grazing in a hollow just below a moderately high ridge to its north. As the wind was blowing from the herd across this ridge, we went up under its shelter, and when about high enough to be level with the game, moved up to the top. Here we found that a smaller ridge, covered with snow, now intervened between us and the herd, and waiting until all the heads were down grazing, we made a rush, and reached the rise without being detected. Climbing cautiously up this with the .303 in my hands,

we were spotted by one of the females, so I sat down at once, and fired at the larger male. He was about 150 yards off, walking slowly away, and as I took too full a sight, the bullet passed over his back. The herd started off at a run, and the next bullet also missed, as the lot disappeared into a snowy hollow beyond. We ran after them, and lying down in the snow on the top of the next rise, I had a couple more shots with the 200 yards' sight up, but without effect. Once more we ran on, as the herd was going slowly up the hill on the opposite side of the glen, and getting on another ridge I fired two more shots, again with no apparent result. Then I put up the 300 yards' sight and aimed at the nearer of the two males, and the second shot brought him rolling down into the snow below. A couple of shots, with the 400 yards' leaf up, at the more distant buck produced no effect, and the remainder disappeared.

That day, having run out of cartridges loaded with Jeffrey's bullets, I was using others with bullets not slit at the sides, but with only the nose cut off. I do not know how far the alteration in the character of the bullet was responsible for what we found. When we got up to the ibex he was stone dead with three bullet holes in him. One had gone clean through the left horn about 4 or 5 inches above the base. Another had gone through one thigh, and the last, which had killed him, had drilled a hole through the middle of his backbone. In each case the hole of exit was but little larger than the hole of entrance. The thigh was not broken up at all, nor was the horn much injured. I cannot help thinking that the slit bullets would have broken up, and would

consequently have inflicted more injury. I will note their effect later on ; so far, I had had no opportunity of seeing what they actually did. The horns of the ibex were only 28 inches long. Evidently I had mistaken the smaller for the better buck, after they disappeared the first time, and consequently shot the wrong one.

The messenger who came back from Bunji that evening, brought news to the effect that Major Hewat, whom I had passed at Tsurri on the 8th of April, had had a fall down some rocks, and had dislocated his shoulder. He had taken a nala near Shongus. Knowing that Major Morland was in the next nala and would do everything that could be done, I did not consider there was any use in going to him, as I should under other circumstances have thought necessary.

On the 7th we moved camp to the Merg nala, lying to the east of Honuspa, but saw nothing fit to shoot while marching in. Nor was anything seen in the afternoon. The tents were in a grove of cedars on a grass terrace at the head of the nala, which is a small one opening into Khaltar.

Next morning the camp was sent to Khaltar village, while I, with my usual retinue, went round by a longer route in order to search the rocks at the end of the nala for markhor. We saw a few females, and that was all. A rather long march brought us to Khaltar village, where I found the camp very prettily situated on a stretch of level grass in a grove of apricot and walnut trees. The Khaltar river flowed past over the rocks immediately below, with the pleasant sound of running water. This nala was evidently much

colder and higher than those we had so far been in, as the apricots were only in blossom, and the corn but just showing.

On the morning of the 9th, having engaged a local shikāri called Dudson, whom Abdulla knew, we had hardly gone two miles up the valley, when we saw what appeared to be a good ibex, grazing beside two females. They were rather high up near a pine wood, and we sat down to watch them. After about an hour they strolled off into the wood and disappeared.

The tiffin coolie was sent back to bring up the camp to where we were, and we went down into a wood of very fine pines in a hollow by the river, and had breakfast, after which I read and wrote letters as usual till evening. From about 4 P.M. the two shikāris had been watching the wood into which the herd had gone, but when by 6 P.M. the goats had not emerged, Abdulla and I went to the tents, leaving Dudson still on the watch.

The tents had been pitched in a thick grove of large pines near the river, so that there might be no danger of their being seen by the ibex. The river which was here of fair size, about 10 or 12 feet wide, was rushing past making a great noise over the rocks. Close beside my tent, from under a large sloping rock, bubbled a clear spring of water, deliciously cold. The ground was slippery with pine needles, and their resinous scent was strong in the air. It was a delightful camp. When it was beginning to get dark, Dudson came and reported that the herd had come out. So we resolved to go after them in the morning.

But rain came on during the night, and continued for some time after daylight on the 10th, and as mists were blowing about, and the wind was never steady in one direction for more than half an hour or so, it was impossible to do anything. The herd had, however, again been sighted, and had again gone into the same wood, so we resolved to go up in the afternoon, on the off-chance of a shot if it came out at a reasonable hour. We did accordingly, and had a couple of hours of discomfort owing to the rain and mist, sitting on the wet ground, with dripping pines and cedars around us. It was unpleasantly cold, as we were close to the snow-line, and sleet came down at intervals. After a considerable wait, the mist became worse and we gave it up, and came down, slipping about badly on the muddy hillsides, on which grass shoes are no manner of use. The tent, though only a single fly, kept out rain admirably, I found, and though everything outside was sopping, my things inside were dry as a bone.

That evening Sultan Ali, who had been sent after the wounded bear, arrived with the skin. The bear had been hit on the 30th of April, and the man had been sent off on the following day. He began to hunt on the 2nd of May, and found the bear on the 9th, he said. He tracked it by the blood for a long way, and then searched likely places around when the blood tracks were no longer visible. The animal was finally descried asleep under a rock, and the men climbing cautiously up the rock, had dropped a stone on the brute's head and killed it. I found that one of the .303 bullets had gone through one hind leg. Consequently the beast must have been

lame, and this probably kept it pretty much in one place. The skull had not been brought in, as it was smashed, the coolie said, and the skin of the head was, I saw, much injured by the stone thrown on it. It was more luck than I expected or deserved getting that skin, and I was glad to give the finder his pay and the promised reward. Chānd was at once sent down to the Khaltar village with the skin, with directions to stretch it to dry on the floor of one of the huts.

On the 11th, nothing further having been seen of the herd near the pine wood, we went up the nala, but quickly arrived at very deep snow, from which it was clear that much was not to be expected. So we went back and gave orders to have the tents taken to a small side nala, which comes into the main one from the west, close to Khaltar village. Here they arrived in the course of the day, and things were made straight by evening.

The full face of the peak of Haramosh was, I found, right in front of my tent, which was pitched looking east, and the view of the setting sun on the snow-fields that evening was a sight to be remembered. I lay on my bed, with my elbows on my pillows, and watched the magnificent spectacle. I had never before seen anything like it, and I could not help wishing that some one capable of painting it in words or colours could have seen it too. The summit was about 13 miles off in a bee-line, no distance at all in that pellucid atmosphere, and the peak looked an enormous height as it stood out with clean-cut edges and sharp point against a background of cloudless sky. The setting sun behind me shone rosy red on the snow fields, from amongst which, in one or two

places, bare stretches of rock, too steep for snow to lie on, stood out in dark contrast. Everything was so distinct, I could see the curves and hollows in the snow, and even, it seemed, places where avalanches had fallen and scraped long lines on the smooth surface. In other parts a grayer tinge showed where huge masses of snow had detached themselves, leaving a comparatively rough and uneven surface behind. Gradually as I watched, the colour became deeper and a tinge of purple came over the mountain, until finally the light slowly faded away, and a sombre pinnacle of grayish white was alone visible against the star-lit sky. I do not think that for grandeur and beauty combined, I have ever seen anything that quite equals the view of the setting sun on the steep glaciers round the peak of Haramosh.

The morning of the 12th rose clear and fine, and we were off up the nala shortly after daybreak, Abdulla, Dudson, a coolie with the tiffin, and I. Shortly after starting we came on the fresh tracks of a bear, which we followed for a while. They led us up the hill and past the remains of an ibex evidently recently killed by a snow leopard. The horns were a fine pair, one 40, and the other 40½ inches long, so I had them put up on a prominent tree to be brought back later. When the tracks were seen to lead in the opposite direction to that in which we wanted to go, we gave up following them and went up the glen instead. The bear had led us up to the snow-line, so we kept there.

The hillside consisted of a series of hollows and ridges, and as we came to each of the latter, we crawled cautiously up to its edge and peered over. If there was nothing in

the depression beyond we stood up and went on. This happened several times, but from one ridge we saw a herd of ibex, a few young males and some half a dozen females, not very far away. Two other herds were also visible, one high up in the snow on our side of the nala, and one consisting of a male and two females on the opposite side, and the furthest off of all. The male in this herd of three seemed from his colour (very light on each side of the dark line down the middle of his back and very dark about the legs) to be an old animal, but he was so very far off that the glasses did not show his horns clearly. This being the best animal visible we resolved to go after him, and accordingly dropped down from the snow-line to the river below, a sharp descent of 1000 or 1500 feet.

Though it was a bit early, we had breakfast when we reached the water, so as to have the day clear for the stalk. We found a good place to sit down in, a pine wood close to the stream. The sides of the river were covered with pines, many of them fine trees, and the path at its side (a very good one for a wonder—made probably by shepherds) was thick with pine needles. The air felt quite warm and balmy after the morning cold on the snow, and the surroundings in the bright sunshine were so delightful, that I was quite loth to get up from my cushiony seat and start for a weary climb to the snow-line again. But that ibex had looked like an old beast, and worth securing, so at 10.30 we started for the stalk, the wind continuing favourable.

The glen at the point where we breakfasted formed a bend. Its general trend for the greater part of its length

was east and west, but here we saw that it originally came from the north, before bending to the easterly direction it pursued during the greater part of its length. Two streams joined it from the west close to the bend, and we went up the high ground between them. This ground was precipitous towards the more northerly of the two streams, and sloped in a series of ridges and hollows towards the one to the south.

When we saw the herd it was far up beyond the snow-line, on one of these ridges, amongst a few birch trees. Our path led us first through a pine forest, and then through a wood of birches, where we struck the snow again, and, owing to the shade, found it lying very deep. When we emerged from this we found ourselves on more open ground, on parts of which the snow had melted. It was mostly grass, but pines, cedars, and birches were dotted about in clumps here and there. The coolie was left at this point, and we three went forward alone. Approaching each ridge with the greatest care, we very cautiously examined the hollow beyond, till we arrived within view of the clump of birch trees, under which the herd had been last seen. Evidently it had gone elsewhere, for there was no sign of it. The ground, as we were advancing west, sloped to our left, and we were going about half way between the precipitous top to our right and the stream below us to the left. After crossing a few ridges like this, we suddenly caught sight of one of the females, and a few minutes after saw the male and both females disappear quietly over the next ridge.

We crossed at once the ridge behind which we had dropped on seeing the herd, and tried to run across the

hollow. But the slope was steep, and the snow was melting and rendered the going very slippery. I fell almost immediately and began sliding down to the river, but slipping my hand to the bottom of my alpenstock, I caught it in the ground and quickly brought myself to, and then crawled cautiously back. In another minute Abdulla was down, but saved himself from going far by seizing a bush. From the next ridge we saw nothing, but the rise after, showed us one of the females lying under a birch-tree with her back to us, and the other grazing and looking up every now and then in our direction. The buck was evidently in the hollow below. Between our ridge and that on which the females were, was a small rise in the ground, over which we could see, and the invisible male was probably behind this. The ibex were about 250 or 300 yards away, and it was clear that if we could get to the small ridge between us and them, they would be within easy range. But the question was how to get to this ridge. If we went down towards the river and crossed our own ridge where there were some trees, and then came up under the smaller ridge, we should inevitably give the goats our wind. If we went up and tried to get over there was no cover, and we should almost certainly have been detected against the snow. So there seemed to be nothing to do but to wait. Accordingly I sat down on the driest spot I could find, and endeavoured to be patient ; every now and then, however, going to the ridge to see if there was any change in the position of affairs.

After about an hour of this and many consultations as to what should be done, it struck us that it might be possible to get over by the aid of a cedar, which was

some five or six yards down the slope on the other side of our ridge. We accordingly went up a little, till we had placed the cedar between us and that watchful female, and then very cautiously crossed the ridge, and running crouching to the cedar got behind it. The branches luckily came far down, and we were perfectly concealed as long as we stayed there. But between us and the hollow we were anxious to reach was a piece of the slope on which we should certainly have been seen. However, this piece was short, and if the female whose head was toward us would but turn her back for one minute, we thought it could be got across in safety. So we sat where we were and watched.

Presently what we had hoped for occurred. The standing female turned round, and with her back towards us, moved up in the direction of the one which was lying down. Instantly Abdulla and I, at opposite sides of the tree, slipped down, and darting across the open space, found ourselves in the hollow and safe. The shikāri had the .303, and Dudson, who had been sitting behind us at the tree, had the Express. As Abdulla and I, congratulating ourselves on the success of our manœuvre, were walking up the small rise which alone now separated us from the goats, we suddenly heard the shrill whistle by which the ibex female warns her companions that there is danger about. My heart sank when I heard that sound, for I thought it was all up. "Dudson's fault," said Abdulla, as we glanced back and saw that he had only just left the tree. Instead of coming with us or staying where he was altogether, he had remained behind for a minute, and then, instead of watching the female to make sure that

her back was turned, had come straight down, and had obviously been seen. As we went up the rise I expected to find all three in full flight. But when an ibex is conscious of danger, without knowing exactly what it is, she keeps on whistling and does not at once run away. Evidently the view of Dudson had not been clear, for when I got to the edge I saw the two females moving excitedly about, whistling at intervals and looking in our direction. I pushed the Lee-Metford, which I had taken from Abdulla, over the top of the ridge, as I lay flat with only half my head visible, and waited for the male to appear.

Apparently he had been lying down in the hollow, for I presently saw him come slowly up towards the females, and stand almost broadside on near the top of the ridge, as if he had been asleep and was not fully awake. This was the first good view I had had of him, and I perceived that the best ibex I had yet seen was within 100 yards of my rifle, and entirely unconscious of my presence. He looked very fine as he stood there, with the gray sweep of his horns almost coming back to his shoulders. As I took aim, I found that a few twigs of the birch under which he was standing would interfere with the shot, so I slipped back, and going higher up the ridge pushed my rifle before me as I crawled up, and found the animals still in the same position. Clearly the male did not know what to make of the excitement of the females. Remembering how high the rifle shoots, I took a very fine sight, and saw the whole of his body above the bead as I pulled the trigger. At the report he moved slightly up the ridge and turned, showing me the whole of his

back. Meantime a cartridge from the magazine had been slipped in, and aiming just above his tail I fired again. Then he started to run—the females had already disappeared—and as he was topping the rise I sent a third bullet after him.

I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw him go out of sight, and concluded I must have missed him. But it was worth following to make sure, so jumping up we ran across the hollow over which I had just fired. Up the next ridge, on which the herd had been a moment before, and over the next hollow, we went as fast as the steep hillside, slippery with melting snow lying over the grass, would let us. This brought us to another ridge, but there were no ibex beyond it. On we ran to a third ridge, and on topping that, saw the buck standing below between a couple of trees and broadside on. Obviously he had been badly hit, or he would not have stayed behind in this way when the females were gone. I was so pumped with the run that it was useless to fire, and I sat down on the top for a minute to recover wind. Then I fired, and saw the earth splash up just beyond where the buck was standing, and thought I must have gone over him. He turned at the shot, and, to my astonishment, bolted as if uninjured down the hill towards the hollow filled with snow, from which the more southerly of the two streams mentioned above originated. I sent a fifth bullet after him as he went, and then we raced down the slope as hard as we could go. I don't know how we got down that slope without an accident, going at the pace we did, but somehow it was done, and we reached a green bank that overhung the snow below.

The little rifle having apparently failed, I took the Express, and released the safety bolt as we got to the edge of the bank. The ibex had been seen to turn up under it, and he ran out about 20 yards off as we approached. I fired both barrels rapidly, and he disappeared round the corner where the gully made a bend. Following along the bank we caught sight of him struggling through the snow, and I was just going to give him an eighth shot when, as he was coming up the bank, he fell, and his horns catching in a bush, he was prevented from slipping down back into the snow. It was not till then that I knew for certain he was hit. I was following in a kind of wild despair, not in the least able to understand why he had not fallen before if he had been hit, and equally unable to understand how he could have been missed. When we came to examine him we found seven holes in his skin. Apparently, from the position of the marks, the first shot had gone clean through (two holes), the second had also hit him and gone up into the body without coming out. The third was a miss, fired as he topped the first rise. The fourth had gone clean through, which accounted for the splash of earth I noticed when I fired the shot (five holes). The fifth had caught him close to the second, and like it had gone up into the body, and one of the Express bullets had also hit (seven holes). I was using for the .303, cartridges loaded with Jeffrey's bullets, and it was clear they could go through when an animal was broadside on. It was extraordinary that the ibex had been able to go so far, and apparently to travel so sound, when he had five bullets in and through him. His horns were a fine pair—just $42\frac{5}{8}$ inches.

We cut off the head, and leaving Dudson to skin him, went back to where the coolie was. Abdulla took the head and the coolie's load, and I took the two rifles, and sending the man back to help Dudson, we started for

IBEX (shot on 12th May).
Length on curve, 42⅝″. Circumference, 8¾″. Tip to tip, 21″.
(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

camp, which we reached at 3.30 P.M., tired with the day's work, but well satisfied with the result.

The skin when Dudson brought it in was too riddled with holes to be worth keeping, and the meat, he said, had been so cut up by bullets that it was useless, and he had brought none back. Certainly the vitality of that ibex was wonderful.

CHAPTER X

MAY 13-19—KHALTAR TO JUTYAL

Fifth and sixth ibex shot—Plateau between Khaltar and Jutyal—Horns and skins to Srinagar—Seventh and eighth ibex shot—Severe climb—Jutyal village—Blank days—Great glacier—Ice-blocks—Dangerous place—Three ibex—Ninth and tenth ibex shot—Flies.

THE dawn of the 13th of May saw us starting off after the other herds we had noticed on the previous day, and at half-past seven we found ourselves at the place where we had breakfasted on the 12th. From there we saw the ibex scattered about, probably fifteen or twenty, on different parts of the precipitous rocks at the end of the glen, looking north from the bend already mentioned. We went up the hill, part of the way, to see how we could best approach, and also to ascertain if the herd would be likely to come down. But the animals stuck to the precipices, and kept moving about amongst them; so about ten o'clock we went back to the stream and had breakfast, resolving to get above the goats later on if it could be done.

About 11 A.M. we started, going up through the snow behind the rocks on which the goats were. When about level with them we cautiously went forward to recon-

noitre, and after prolonged examination of the various groups, came to the conclusion that though no very good ibex were about, there were two with fair heads, at which a shot was possible if we went up amongst the rocks. So we started off, and after a lot of rough scrambling and walking, through melting and very slippery snow, reached a ledge beyond which many of the herd, including the two shootable ibex, were. Further than this we apparently could not get, as the rocks to our left looked too steep to climb, and going up the ridge itself would have involved showing ourselves. The animals were out of range, so there seemed nothing to do but to wait till they should see fit to come down and graze. This they were certain to do by evening, we thought, as the grass was all behind us, and in passing they were very likely to give us a shot.

In an hour or so, when it was beginning to get late, and the ibex did not seem disposed to move, I suggested trying the rocks to our left, which, though very hard going, seemed to me possible. So we attacked them, but it was pretty well as much as we could do to climb up, as the rocks were very rotten and gave way under our weight, and even in our hands when we gripped them to pull ourselves up. But we managed it, and just as we arrived at the top the herd made up its mind to go for the grass, and began coming down fast. In the hollow below us was a small rise, and as we lay flat watching, a number of ibex, including one of the males we wanted, came down on to this rise from the rocks beyond. As they did so one of the watchful females saw us, and whistled, and the whole lot stopped and looked

at where we lay. As we had evidently been detected, I sat up, and with the Lee-Metford aimed at the male who was looking straight at me, end on, about 150 yards away. When I fired he bolted down the rise, and then up the rocks beyond, where he gave me a broadside shot. I put up the 200 yards' leaf and fired again, but without effect. I then put up the 300 yards' sight, and had a third shot, but he still went on. So putting up the 400 yards' sight I fired two more, pretty fast, one after the other. At the fifth shot I had the satisfaction to see him roll over, and catching his horns in a bush, lie still. I then picked out another male, and after two or three shots saw him lie down. Taking the binoculars I perceived he was hit on the quarter. It was then fast getting late. The nearer ibex was a considerable distance off, and to get at him would have involved a long detour. We were a good way from camp, with some dangerous ground to get over on our way back. One ibex was dead, and the other we knew could not go far. So we resolved to return and to send for the horns on the following day. This we accordingly did.

The head of the ibex that had been killed was brought in next day, and measured $35\frac{1}{2}$ inches for one horn and $36\frac{1}{4}$ for the other. There were six bullet holes in the skin: two small ones in the shoulder and ribs on the right side (which was facing me when he was running across), and two large ones, bigger than would be made by a 12-bore, on the left side and lower down. Evidently the .303 bullets had gone clean through, but had mushroomed a bit in doing so, and made large holes coming out. The other two holes I could not satisfactorily explain.

The second ibex was not recovered for several days. Dudson went back for it when I had left the nala, and gave me the horns on the 6th of June when I was passing through Darsu. They only measured $30\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The 14th was taken as an off-day, and I had the luxury of a tub. After breakfast, which I had on a grassy bank under a cedar near my tent, I turned my sheepskin sleeping bag inside out, and mended several rents therein which had been annoying me. I took the opportunity also to put on buttons, darn socks, and do other repairs. In the afternoon we went up the mountain behind the tents, to look for the bear whose track we had seen, but saw no signs of him.

On the 15th we marched through Khaltar to the plateau which lies between that and the Jutyal nala, and camped on its flat top, near the point where it is connected with the mountains. It runs north and south, and the southern end slopes down towards the Great Bend of the Indus, close to where the streams from the Khaltar and Jutyal nalas join the main river. We had to camp at the northern end so as to be near snow, there being no spring on the plateau.

I knew that Bond must be leaving about this date, so sent a man with a letter to him to inquire. He was then, I heard, camped in Kutyal, the sub-nala which runs into Jutyal just above Darsu.

That evening I made up such horns and skins as I had into three loads, and sent them off in charge of Jamāla, one of the permanent coolies, to Srinagar. He was to take two local coolies with him, and bring me back a lot of stores, puttoo socks, cartridges, and other

things. I had considerable difficulty in getting local coolies to go, but with the aid of the lambardar of Khaltar succeeded at last.

On the 16th we went northwards along the top of the plateau till the ground changed its flat character, and began to rise in height and break up into rocky masses. Examining the hillside below as we went along, we presently saw a small herd of ibex with two males in it coming up.

We watched the herd for some time, and then seeing the direction it was taking, Abdulla and I started to intercept it, going as noiselessly as possible down the hill. When we had descended some 200 feet or so, we crept up to the roots of a birch, and raising my head gradually, I found myself face to face with an ibex lying on a rock below about 60 yards off, and looking up at me. As only a part of my head could have been visible to him, he evidently could not make out what it was exactly he saw, and sat still, watching intently. None of the others had caught sight of us.

I slowly brought up the Lee-Metford into position, and aiming at the animal's shoulder fired. He jumped up and started off downhill, but fell on to his head twice in going, and I knew he was badly hit. Seeing the other buck going off with the females, I ran down to a lower position from which the view was less hampered by trees, and fired at him with the 200 yards' sight up as he was going from me. He continued running as if nothing had happened, and a little further on stood still and looked back over his shoulder. I put up the 300 yards' sight, and had another shot, whereupon all disappeared. We then went

down to the wounded ibex, whom we had seen get under a bush, and found him lying there. On our approach he got up and limped off, but was quickly caught and killed in the orthodox manner. His horns were small, only 30 inches. As he lay looking at me when I saw him first I was unable to tell their length, or I should not have fired at him. When the head and skin had been removed we went to where a patch of snow was lying, under some fine old cedars, and had breakfast.

Before leaving camp in the morning it had been arranged that the tents were to be sent down to Jutyal village, and that we were to make our way there by the evening. So about 2 P.M. the shikāri and I left the place where we had breakfasted to examine the hillside further up the valley.

Shortly after starting, we were struck by seeing a number of crows and one or two kites near some rocks a little above us. As this seemed odd we went up to see what they were after, and found the second ibex lying dead, the buck at which I had fired the second and third shots. The bullet had caught him close to the tail, and had gone up into his body. He had gone about a quarter of a mile with this severe wound before dropping, and there was not a trace of blood on his track except close to where he fell. The horns when measured were found to be only 26 inches, and the ibex should not, of course, have been fired at. But it is impossible to judge the size properly when an animal is bolting, and many a small pair of horns is obtained in this way by a shot at a flying beast.

After sending off Chānd and the spare coolie with

the heads to Jutyal, Abdulla and I went on. We were making towards some bare precipitous rocks, amongst which it seemed likely that we should find markhor. Getting above them we searched long and anxiously, but saw nothing, and then as it began to grow late started downwards. The ground was exceedingly bad, and the climbing as difficult as any I have done.

We were on a spur stretching out from the main range, at right angles to it and the bed of the stream, and the sides were too precipitous where it started to allow of our going down. It was, of course, impossible to say from where we were whether the end towards the river was a gentle slope or a sharp drop, as owing to the masses of rock which lay piled up all over it, we could not make out what it was like. It was only possible to see for a short distance at a time, for a number of old pines and cedars had contrived to find growing room in the crevices of the rocks at the crest, and these largely obstructed the view. Repeatedly we were obliged to turn back on finding that the route we had chosen ended in a sheer drop, and I began to consider how it would be when it got dark if we were not clear of the spur by that time. A fire was all we could count on having, for we had come across no water, and the snow was far behind us. Of course we had nothing with us to eat and no bedding, so a night on that crest promised to be very cheerless. We could not even retrace our steps, for we had come down places which we certainly could not have gone up without assistance in the shape of ropes and ladders. One place which involved going round and up a precipitous

rock on a narrow ledge would, I at first thought, have beaten us altogether, but we managed it without accident, and I was much relieved when it was passed. The end of the spur proved to be a precipice, and I thought we were done for, when we emerged on the last rock, and looked down a drop of some 90 or 100 feet. Far below us lay the pastures and green fields of Jutyal, and at one end of them a couple of tiny patches of khāki[1] showed where our tents were standing pitched in the open. The Jutyal stream, turbid with melting snow, lay between us and the tents, and as the sun was setting the prospect of reaching them seemed remote. Turning back we continued our search, and at last, after considerable climbing, succeeded in getting on to a slope covered with the sage-like plant grazed on by the wild goats, and thence by a series of sharp descents, mainly down the bed of a mountain torrent, to the bottom of the nala. Going down stream, we soon found a place to cross by jumping from rock to rock, and a few minutes after saw us, just before dark, back at our tents.

Here I heard from Bond, and learned he was at Sarsal on his way to Skardo. I also heard from Hewat, who having dislocated his shoulder, had come to Sarsal to await the arrival of a doctor from Gilgit for whom he had sent. The apothecary from Skardo, who had visited him at Shongus, had been unable to do anything for him.

The 17th proved a blank day. We went off a little after dawn as usual, leaving orders for the camp to follow, and getting on to a stony ridge which overhung the glacier at the top of the nala, we took up a

[1] Dust colour, of which the tents had been dyed.

convenient spot and carefully examined the opposite hillside: our own side of the nala was too much wooded to be worth searching. Nothing was seen in the morning, so we had breakfast in a pretty pine wood, and I spent the middle of the day at chess problems and letters. The evening also was fruitless as far as game went, and about dusk we returned to the camp, which had meantime come up part of the way towards us, and was, we found, pitched in a fine grove of cedars and pines.

Next morning (18th) we were up early as usual, and after again directing the camp to follow us, went further up the nala along by the edge of the glacier, searching the opposite side. We saw two herds of ibex, but they were in positions which effectually forbade approach, so there was nothing for it but to have patience till evening.

We therefore sat down in a birch wood at the edge of the glacier, where, only for the flies, we should have passed a pleasant day. I do not know whether flies are peculiar to this valley or not, but we were curiously troubled by them all the time we were there. I could understand their being in considerable numbers near goatherds' huts and goat-pens, and by the filthy houses of the Bāltis, but why they should have been so numerous close to the snow and ice of the Jutyal glacier, and far from any villages, I could not make out.

In the afternoon we crossed the glacier, a very troublesome and tedious business, as the ice was badly fissured with crevasses and entirely covered with boulders and gravel, and must have been nearly two miles wide where we went over. Examining the

opposite hillside from a rocky prominence on the glacier, we saw a herd with one fair male, but the stalk proved a failure, as we were seen before we were at all in range, and the animals went off up the hill.

A wearisome trudge back across the glacier brought us by moonlight to our camp, prettily situated in a little grassy glen at the edge of a pine wood, with a clear stream rippling merrily along. A low hill covered with birch-trees separated us from the glacier. My tent was pitched beside the stream, in a sort of open glade clothed with short grass, which made a soft green carpet under my feet. Looking north, the resinous-scented pines stood on my right and the feathery birches on my left; behind me was the pleasant sound of the water, and in front a magnificent view of the five great snow-clad peaks, rising cold and white in the moonlight. Altogether, I thought this was one of the most delightfully situated of the many delightful camping grounds I occupied in Baltistan.

On the morning of the 19th we followed the ridge overhanging the glacier almost to its end, and then crossed to the other side. The Jutyal glacier is of considerable dimensions. It is some miles long, and its upper end lies in a semicircular opening in the mountains, which is certainly more than two miles wide. At each side is a lateral moraine of varying height formed of sand, gravel, and boulders, and between these two banks the great ice-river makes its way. The surface of the ice is almost everywhere covered, as noted above, with gravel and broken rocks. In places these form large mounds, and no ice is anywhere visible. In others the layer thins out till the dark ice crops up to the surface. Pools of

water abound, and there are big fissures here and there with sides of smooth ice. Great boulders lie embedded in many of these, and in others the ice is so split and cut away underneath that cavernous hollows are formed. From almost all the sound of running water is heard, and a fall into some would be almost certainly fatal, as the victim of such an accident would be carried far down the channels which must exist below.

The ice at the highest point of the glacier, where we crossed it on the 19th, was much less covered with gravel and *débris* than lower down. The crevasses also were deeper and wider, and we had considerable difficulty in reaching the lateral moraine on the far side. Many times we were turned back by the impassable barrier of a yawning chasm in the ice, the sides perfectly smooth and shining with a steely blue. In some places the ice-blocks lay in big masses high above the ordinary level of the glacier, and we went past walls of ice higher than our heads. The main glacier on which we stood was apparently the result of the accumulations of snow which had come sliding down from the ravines in the semicircle of mountains around us. The pressure appeared to have turned the snow into blue ice. In many places regular steps of ice, yards high, had been formed by blocks of the same substance breaking off.

The view from this glacier looking up was exceedingly fine. As observed already, the mountains here form a wide semicircle, with several subsidiary glaciers in their ravines, always at work, slowly grinding their way downwards. Each of these was a repetition, on a small scale, of the immense ice-river into which they all flow, except that

they carried but little gravel or boulders. All were covered with a thick blanket of snow, but in some places where fragments of ice had been detached, big walls of slaty blue, sometimes forming a series of giant steps, stood out in contrast to the white around. The upper half of the range was, of course, all under snow, and the glittering semicircle of five splendid peaks (the lowest 21,570 feet above the sea), brilliantly lit up by the morning sun, stood out with wonderful clearness against the deep blue of a cloudless sky. The highest of the five unnamed giants is actually a couple of hundred feet higher than Haramosh, and though more than 5 miles from where I stood, he looked so close that I could hardly believe I could not throw a stone on to his shining slopes. Every curve and line of the great mountain seemed to be visible in that extraordinary atmosphere. The crests of ridges running upwards, where the snow sometimes thinned and permitted a glimpse of the dark stone below, the dead white of the hollows between where the snow lay yards thick, the huge protuberances formed by masses of solid rock which the friction of the ice of centuries had been unable to grind down, even the paths of the avalanches and the irregular forms which they assumed as they rolled down, all stood out as clear, as if only a few hundred yards away.

When nearly over and close to the lateral moraine on the west of the glacier, we saw three male ibex by themselves on a grassy slope not very far up, and at the edge of one of the subsidiary glaciers to which I have already referred. The horns of one seemed to be good, and of the

others fair, and as the wind was favourable and the goats were in a good position, we decided to attempt the stalk.

So, crossing the gravel boundary, and going over a small ridge, we dropped into a hollow full of birches, and, keeping along its bottom, went down its length sheltered by the trees. The ibex were grazing about on the grassy slope and quite unconscious of danger as we crept forward. The slope they were on was a gentle one, and immediately above a precipice, so when we got fairly near we were underneath and out of sight. Creeping out of the hollow, we went up to a large rock which stood out some 20 or 30 feet high above the mountain-side, and here we left Chānd with the breakfast things, while Abdulla, a local coolie, and I, went on.

The climb was over rocks and sand, and was pretty steep, and later on we had a nasty place to negotiate. Along the side of the glacier, next the grassy slope, a hollow had been formed, and as the sun melted the ice, a stream of water came down it. Also at frequent intervals boulders and rocks, released from the ice, came tearing down, and as the slope was steep they went at a great pace. The floor of the shoot thus formed was all slushy and slippery with the melting ice and the *débris* which the glacier was dropping, and we halted for some time on the edge, watching the rocks racing down the shoot, and considering if there was any way of getting to the ibex without crossing it. Immediately above us, to the left, the thick ice of the glacier foot shone out under the snow, and the continuous drip warned us that blocks of it might at any moment give way and sweep us down. To the right the shoot ended in a clear drop

of some 50 or 60 feet, and we could hear the stones, as they flew over the edge, falling and breaking into fragments on the rocks beneath. If any of us missed his footing on the slope, or was struck by a rock, he must be killed. However, there was no other way; so, waiting till an unusually large mass had gone clattering down the shoot, we made a dart of it, and the next moment were hugging the rocks on the far side. Luckily the shoot was only some 15 or 20 feet across, and did not, therefore, take long to get over.

Leaving the coolie here, we went up and saw ahead of us a bank of earth, which ran along one side of the grassy slope on which the goats had been last seen, and which rose directly from the hollow at the edge of the glacier. We crept up cautiously behind this, till we thought we were on a level with the herd, and then turned up to its crest, which we reached, lying flat on the ground. Peering cautiously over, we were astonished to find that no ibex were to be seen. The grassy slope was tenantless; so we crawled quite up, on to the top of the bank, and examined the rocks above us.

There, lying on a rock, calmly looking at us, was one of the ibex. I could not see any of the others, nor could I tell which of the three was before me; only the head and a part of the body were visible, the rest being hidden by the rock on which he lay. He was about 100 yards or so away, and, taking careful aim, I fired, upon which he rolled down the hill at once. The two others, who had been concealed by some rocks close by, here jumped up, and I aimed at the nearer of the two with the next cartridge. He at once left his companion, and came

running down a snow slope to my left. I fired several shots at him as he ran by, but though he must have passed within 50 yards I seemed to miss him every time. He came down the glacier and bolted across it, when, just as he was at the middle of it, and some 150 yards off, a bullet caught him on the off hind-leg, and after standing still a minute he lay down.

Meantime the third animal had disappeared, and we went to that first shot. To my great regret the horns were only 25 inches, and as the second seemed a still smaller beast, I felt very sorry indeed. I cannot tell how we came to make so bad an estimate, for, of course, if we had supposed they were so small, we should never have gone after the herd. The probability is that the third animal, which got away, had the best horns, and that it was his we had thought decently good when we started. When I caught sight of the beast first shot from the bank, he was facing me, and of course I could not judge of his horns, and the next shot was fired in a hurry and as the animals were bolting. The ibex was stone dead, the bullet having caught him where neck and shoulder join. It had not passed through.

After taking the head off, we left the coolie to skin him, and went over the glacier to the second animal. His horns were only $23\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and I was greatly disgusted at the morning's work. He also was lying dead when we reached him, and at the edge of a crevasse down which if he had slipped we should never have seen him again. He had evidently been hit by the second shot I fired, and this was what must have made him come down towards me, instead of going up with his companion.

The bullet had apparently glanced off a rib and gone upwards, just grazing the side of the backbone without breaking it. There was a small hole where it went in and a large one where it came out, showing it had broken up in its passage. Both were on the near side of the backbone, which proved that the bullet had not gone

IBEX (*Capra sibirica*) (Front view of head on p. 149).

under it. How it happened that the backbone was not broken I cannot make out. The second bullet had smashed the animal's right hind-leg. It had entered the back of the thigh, broken the bone into pieces, and come out in front through a large hole. Neither wound, judging from its position, should have been at once fatal,

yet the beast was stone dead when we got to him. After this we went down, negotiated the shoot in safety once more, and had breakfast under the rock where Chānd had been left.

Then he and the coolie were sent back to the camp; and as we proposed working along the western side of the nala next day, he was told to send Mahamdu, with bedding and food, to a wood a couple of miles lower down, which that coolie knew of, and in which Abdulla had camped with another sportsman the year before.

We stayed for the day under the rock, grievously tormented by flies, hundreds of which I must have killed with a newspaper. Where they came from, or how they were bred, I could not imagine. There was nothing but rock, ice, snow, and a few trees and shrubs anywhere near us, and it froze regularly between sunset and sunrise; yet the common house-fly was around me in thousands, just as if I had been close to a sweetmeat shop in an Indian bazaar.

About four we started down the nala, keeping along the edge of the main glacier, and soon met Mahamdu coming with our requirements for the night. We camped in a fine wood, my bed being spread on a soft cushion of dry leaves between a birch and a pine. A fire by my side gave me plenty of light for dinner, which Abdulla cooked. The sky was cloudless, and there was a bright moon, so we were all very comfortable. The last thing I remember as I fell asleep was the face of the moon, nearly straight above me, darkened by the delicate twigs of the birch-tree, as the boughs swayed gently under the influence of the night wind.

CHAPTER XI

MAY 20-30—JUTYAL TO KUTYAL

A blank day—March to Kutyal—Wet—No camp—Sheep-pens—Haramosh by moonlight—The Round Gorge—Markhor—Ibex—Rain—Herd very wary—Hard stalk on 26th—Failed—Moved camp on 27th—The same ibex again—Sleeping in the snow—Eleventh ibex—Second red bear.

The 20th of May was a day of hard walking, high up along the western side of the nala, unrelieved by the sight of any game. That evening our camp had been sent back to where we had been on the 17th, but we found, owing to the day having been warm and sunny, that the snow-fed stream between us and the tents was greatly swollen, and that wading was therefore necessary. The men came over to help us, and with the aid of a big log or two we got across without much trouble, but found the cold of the river most painful.

The same evening it was settled that the camp should next day (21st) leave the Jutyal nala and go up that known as Kutyal, and on the 22nd meet us at a sheep-pen immediately above the village of Barchu in that nala,—we, meantime, going round by the mountains and sleeping the night of the 21st somewhere under a rock.

So the morning of the 21st found us climbing the hill on the eastern side of the nala, going chiefly through pine woods. Nothing was seen in the forenoon except some female ibex, and we sat down for the usual mid-day halt in a shady wood, where we found a quantity of wild onions, which proved a most grateful addition to the breakfast. It had been arranged that Mahamdu was to follow us with food and bedding, and the coolie we had brought with us was, after breakfast, sent back to meet him and lead him to where we were likely to stop for the night. This place could of course be only generally indicated, but the men were to come to where we had breakfasted and then follow our tracks.

About 2 P.M. we set off again, and soon sighting a herd of ibex having its mid-day siesta on some rocks entirely surrounded by snow, we sat down to wait for it to descend. While we waited a smart storm of sleet came on and chilled us to the bone, and as the herd did not move till it was beginning to get dark, we were very cold when we started to try and intercept it. The ground was all wet with the fresh sleet, and the bushes and trees we pushed through helped to soak us still further. Of course our feet were wet through before we started—grass shoes are little protection against sleet—and we were therefore in rather miserable plight when, to our disgust, the herd, instead of coming down the hollow we had hoped they would take, went over the ridge to our right and disappeared entirely.

Meantime the men with the bedding and food had caught us up, but while we were on the stalk had stayed judiciously below in the woods. When the

ibex disappeared, we went down to them, and found that Mahamdu had discovered a large sloping rock sheltering a good-sized platform, and had even lighted a fire at which all were drying themselves. Searching about amongst the trees, another sloping rock was quickly found lower down, and as the leaves under it were quite dry, I soon had my bedding spread out on them. Cutting three forked sticks and driving them into the ground near my bed, I hung the lantern from the point where they met. The waterproof that covered the bedding I put up with an arrangement of sticks to keep the wind off my head, and very shortly after it got dark I was snug in bed.

A fire was as usual lighted near where I lay, and one of the men sat beside it drying his own things and those I had taken off, while I waited for dinner and wrote up my diary. In a hollow below me I could see where Abdulla, at a bright fire, was cooking my dinner, which proved an unusually good one—soup (from a soup tablet), roast shoulder of mutton, curry and rice, and stewed apricots. Potatoes and chupatties of course. How he contrived all this under the circumstances I did not understand. When dinner was over, he kicked out his fire, scattered mine (for fear of sparks on the bedding while I slept), and then went up to where the other men were, under their big rock.

I put out the light and lay down, and thought of my curious surroundings. The rain had stopped soon after dark, and the moon was endeavouring to shine through misty clouds. The drip from the rock under which I lay, fell close to the bedding, but outside it, and the water

trickled down the hillside. There was a little wind, and the waterproof at my head flapped a bit, but did not break loose. The air was very cold, for we were close to the snow-line, but I had plenty of bedding, and was warm and comfortable. Occasionally a gust of wind, stronger than usual, would send a shower of rain-drops from the trees pattering on to the leaves on the ground, and would make me glad I had put the waterproof up. The men's voices quickly ceased, and in the silence that ensued I could just catch the faint sound of running water, the last sound in my ears as I went to sleep.

The morning of the 22nd was cloudy and dull, and foreboded the rain, which came down before evening. We had some bad ground to get over, and it was not quite certain that we should get over it. However, the worst was crossed by breakfast time, and about one o'clock we all stood on the ridge looking down into the Kutyal valley. It had by that time come on to rain, and a heavy mist was rolling up the valley, rendering it very difficult for us to find our way. So we lighted a fire under a rock and waited till it cleared a little. The mist after a time got less, but the rain continued, and it was coming down very steadily as we started once more. The muddy hillsides were uncommonly slippery, and I found wet grass shoes gave no grip on the ground, and wished I had on my spiked shooting-boots. About 4 P.M. we reached the sheep-pens, over Barchu, expecting to find a comfortable camp, fires, and a change of clothing awaiting us. But, to our consternation, there was not a human being or a tent visible—nothing but the big overhanging rocks under which the sheep and goats were

usually folded, the sopping hillside, and the rain coming down pitilessly on us all.

There was no doubt that this was the right place, for there were the sheep-pens before us, and through the mist of the valley immediately below we could see the green fields and the pastures of Barchu. There was nothing to be done but make the best of a bad job. So we sent two of the coolies down to Barchu, to send us up a fowl and some flour, and to make inquiries about the camp. Then we collected some wood (by extraordinary good luck there was a fair supply, quite dry, in a corner of one of the sheep-pens) and made a good fire in the larger enclosure. This was formed under a high overhanging rock, the ground underneath being enclosed by low walls, about 3 feet high, made of rough stones piled up. There was plenty of room for all of us under the rock, and here we proceeded to dry our things. I reduced myself to my shirt, and in a very few minutes after the steam rising from our garments was like a cloud of smoke.

In an hour or so most of my things were dry enough to put on. Luckily, as we had been sleeping out the previous night, we had our bedding with us. So after getting the floor cleaned, as far as was possible, and levelled where necessary, I spread the brown waterproof sheet on the ground, and made my bed thereon. The lantern was placed on a neighbouring stone, and getting into bed I watched another wonderful sunset on the glaciers of Haramosh; for that splendid mountain was once more in sight, and so near that it seemed as if it rose straight up from the opposite

side of the Kutyal valley. From Jutyal it had never been visible, and I was quite glad to see again the well-known jagged summit, lit up by the rays of the setting sun. The evening had turned quite fine, and the hoary old peak was bathed in the softest and loveliest shades of pink and rosy red, changing as the sunlight faded into the most exquisite tints of purple and mauve. The eye never tired of that indescribable scene. I had watched it now several times, and I was glad to think that I should probably witness it for many evenings more.

Dinner was naturally a scanty meal that night. There was a little bacon and a very small amount of tea and sugar, and Abdulla said he had a couple of handfuls of flour. So he made me two chupatties, and these with a slice of cold bacon and a drink of water, made an appetising but not exactly copious repast. The men made themselves comfortable with lots of firing in another sheepfold. Everything considered, we were not so badly off after all.

The night was brilliantly fine, and the moon nearing the full, and when, before lying down, I turned to have a look out, I was almost startled by the appearance of Haramosh. The huge peak shone with a pearly whiteness in the moonlight against a background of blue black sky. I had thought it looked near with the rays of the setting sun upon it, but now it looked nearer still, and appeared as if almost overhanging the valley immediately below. Three sides of the sheep-pen were open to the sky, and I could see the long range of snow-clad mountains, of which Haramosh is the most conspicuous object. They looked close as if almost forming part of the other

side of the nala, but nothing like as close as the great peak itself, whose enormous height seemed right above me, and whose side looked like a single sheer precipice from the snow-line on the ridge opposite to the tapering apex itself. It was a wonderful sight, which, for loneliness and sublimity, I do not think I have ever seen equalled.

When I awoke the following morning, the 23rd, I found that the shikāri had cooked for my chota hāzri a fowl which had been sent up during the night by the tiffin coolie. I was glad enough to have some of it with my tea, and we then started for a side glen which we hoped would show us markhor. We went up the nala, keeping at our then level, some 2000 feet above the stream below. We took one local coolie with us, and by 8 A.M. were seated on a ridge, examining a very curiously-shaped ravine, which I shall call the Round Gorge for convenience.

The upper part of this ravine was to our left, and consisted of a wide stretch of very steep rocks, close to the crest of the range, and, where the slope was not too sharp, covered with snow. Below this was a mass of similar rocks not quite so steep, but also covered with snow. Next came, still getting narrower as the Gorge descended, a jumble of irregular rocks, mostly uneven blocks—some flat, some perpendicular—but all below the snow-line. The lower part of these rocks must have held clay in the interstices between the boulders, for cedars and pines, and bushes of various kinds, grew there. Immediately below these rocks, and coming up to their base, was an extensive slope of grass, ending off

to the south in a wood of birch-trees, where the ravine began to close in. Below the birches, the Gorge narrowed still further into a channel just wide enough to permit of the exit of the stream which flowed from the snow above, past the western side of the grassy slope. Here the sides were of almost perpendicular rock, and the river went down to the main nala, in a series of cataracts, which must have rendered it very difficult for even a goat to use that road for coming up.

We had not been studying the rocks for long, when we became aware of eight markhor, all males, quietly making their way up amongst the rocks on the opposite side. They went slowly, stopping occasionally to butt at each other and play about, and we watched them for certainly over an hour. They were amongst rocks, from which they must have seen us had we attempted a stalk, and we determined to wait till evening, so I had my breakfast, and employed myself as usual, writing and reading and playing chess, till near 3 P.M., when our attention was attracted by a herd of ibex which had appeared in the interval on the grassy slope and were grazing about there. There were five good males—one especially fine—three small males and two females in the herd, but we could see no way of getting near them, owing to their position, and the unfavourable wind, so we gave it up after a time in despair, and went back, about half an hour's walk, to where there was a small stream.

After breakfast we had sent back the coolie to this place, with instructions to have the camp pitched there. There was practically no level ground, but the pathway

had been enlarged in one place, evidently by my predecessor in the nala, just sufficiently to allow of a tent being pitched. Shortly after we arrived the coolies came up. The cook explained that the contretemps of the previous evening was due to his having gone up the stream beyond Barchu, not understanding that he was to come up the hill. He had been told to go "above Barchu." He had understood this to mean higher up the river, and accordingly went up, whereas the shikāri had meant higher up the hill.

Rain fell during the night, and it was still raining when day broke on the 24th, and the wind was constantly changing, so we did not go out till after breakfast; and then on arriving at the Round Gorge, found the ibex (yesterday's herd) high up in the snow. They came down towards the evening and we tried a stalk, but the animals were very wary; and when, after crossing the stream on a bridge of frozen snow, we reached the grassy slope where they should have been found, they had disappeared. Apparently they had winded us. No markhor were seen at all, so we went back to the tent, wet, cold, and disappointed. It had snowed during the day, and was raining pretty hard when we were returning.

The 25th proved a very trying day. When we reached the ridge overlooking the Gorge not long after daybreak, we were surprised to see the herd of ibex we were after, high up amongst the rocks, the females whistling in much alarm and all looking down at the grassy slope. There was nothing that we could see to cause the alarm, but it was evident something had

frightened them, probably a snow leopard prowling near. We stayed quiet for a time, and after an hour or so the herd lay down.

Then we started to go down the hill towards the grassy slope, so as to have a shorter distance to travel when the herd came down, as they were bound to do later on, to feed. But we found that we could not go far without exposing ourselves, and accordingly stopped where some large rocks and a few cedars gave us cover. Here I had breakfast, the fire being lighted beside a rock which sheltered us from the ibex. Snow came on while I was at breakfast, and continued fairly persistently till three o'clock, when the sun once more appeared.

The ibex then began to move downwards, and we made a laborious stalk. It was a troublesome climb down to the snow bridge, and a difficult job getting up on the rocks beyond. By that time the herd was grazing on the grassy slope, and we lay flat on the rocks immediately above, and wriggled our way on. But the ibex evidently suspected something, for they shortly began to graze away from us, and by the time we were able to let ourselves drop on to this slope, they had got back to the foot of the crags by which they had descended. We worked our way slowly on, and just as the goats were getting up on the rocks, reached a spot some 300 or 400 yards from them. Abdulla was evidently sick of the herd, and wanted me to fire on the off-chance, but I knew that as long as I refrained from doing so the ibex were unlikely to leave the nala, and I might get within range another day, whereas if I fired and missed,

I should most probably never see them again. So I refrained, and we went back to the tents, much exercised in mind at having spent three days in pursuit of that one herd without getting a chance of a shot.

The next day, on returning again to the ridge over the Round Gorge, we saw the herd high up amongst what seemed inaccessible rocks. They were far above the snow-line moving quietly about. The snow came down on us at intervals, and it was very cold; so I had a fire lighted under a sheltering rock, and tried to keep warm. Abdulla and I had many consultations as to what was best to be done. By about ten o'clock the whole herd had lain down, and it seemed unlikely the animals would move till quite late. Evidently they had been badly frightened, and were resolved not to leave the position of security they occupied for a considerable time. So we determined to try and get at them where they were, and with a view to this got breakfast over. Then about noon we started—Abdulla, the local coolie, and I—Chānd being sent back to the camp.

We had first a very long climb on grass up the ridge, and then struck downwards along a steep gully. This brought us to the first snow, and I confess I did not at all like what I saw was before us. In front was a long narrow hollow, running up towards the crest of the range, and filled with snow. To the right it ended in a precipice which, as we approached, we had seen to be of considerable depth. Our route lay partly up this hollow, and then across to rocks beyond. We had to go upwards, because right opposite we could not have climbed out of the hollow at all. The snow slope was exceed-

ingly steep, and Abdulla inquired softly of the coolie whether it would bear us or slip. If it slipped, nothing could save us; that we could see for ourselves. Anxiously we looked all round to see if there was any other way, but there was none. So, holding hands, we stepped cautiously into the hollow, and pressed the snow hard down, to give a good foothold. When we got into the snow we let go, for there was nothing to be gained by holding each other there. If the snow slipped we must all go, and if it held we were all safe. Slowly we made our way up, Abdulla leading and making the footsteps which we followed in behind. The snow held and we crossed in safety, but it was about the most risky bit of walking I did while in Bāltistān. Climbing on, we reached in about half an hour a patch of sloping grass, on which, for some unknown reason, there was hardly any snow. The place was greatly exposed, and was about 300 yards from where the herd was lying. So, leaving the coolie in shelter, the shikāri and I laid ourselves down flat and proceeded to wriggle across it. But it was no use. The herd was far too much on the alert, and we were quickly detected.

As soon as the ibex began to get on their feet, we also jumped up and ran to the edge of the grass. This brought us within about 250 yards of the goats, now beginning to slowly file off. They had been lying on some bare rocks which formed an island entirely surrounded by snow, and on examining the place afterwards, we saw that there was absolutely no way of getting within range unseen. The route we had adopted was as good as any. As there seemed now no likelihood of getting

another chance I lay down and fired at the big buck, but there was no precipice here to delay him, so the animal did not wait to give me many shots, but disappeared in a very short time, untouched. This was the fourth day after this herd, and much the hardest we had yet had, and it was with melancholy feelings that we retraced our steps, and walked slowly back to camp.

On the 27th we moved the tents, marching across the Round Gorge where we had spent so many days. The new camp was above the snow-line, and looked down on the point where the streams of the two small ravines above unite at the opening of the Kutyal nala. In the afternoon we saw some ibex and tried to stalk them, but the wind was unfavourable and we gave it up. Snow began again to fall about 5 P.M., and it was still snowing when I went to sleep.

The Kashmiris had the other tent, but I was sorry for the Bālti coolies, who had no shelter except from an overhanging rock. This, however, they are accustomed to, and apparently consider enough. They usually light a large fire in front of such a rock, and then huddling close together, seem to sleep comfortably.

The morning of the 28th of May broke on an unsullied sheet of white on the hills around me. The tent walls were like boards, and everything outside was frozen hard. The snow had to be dug away before I could get out. We went up to some high rocks which commanded a view of the Round Gorge, and there, far below us, saw two of the herd we had been after for so many days. For a long time one of them had his head turned in our direction and we could do nothing, but

after breakfast we saw both go downwards, and at once started off after them.

When we came to where they had been last seen, we found that they had gone up instead of down, and were, with the rest of the old herd, amongst the precipitous rocks far above us. We accordingly waited under a rock in hopes they would come down, and sent the local man back to get bedding and food from the camp, so as to be able to spend the night out if necessary. We ought to have known better than to spend more time after these exceedingly astute ibex, but the fine head amongst them led me on; and though we had already wasted four days, I found myself giving up a fifth to their pursuit.

About four it began to snow, and if the herd had come down within 10 yards of us we could not have seen it. The snow continued, with occasional breaks, until just dusk, and the ibex would not leave the high rocks. So we gave up in despair, and climbed down to where by this time the coolies with the things ordered had arrived.

There were no overhanging rocks to be found anywhere, so I had to be content with a small perpendicular one, beside which there was a narrow ledge. This was widened in the way commonly adopted in these hills. A pine log was placed against the edge, and kept there by stakes driven into the ground below; grass and sods were then rammed in between the log and the earth, and the ledge roughly levelled. By a piece of good luck, the snow stopped for about half an hour, and I had just time to have my bedding spread on the level place formed as above described, and to undress and get into bed before

it began again. I had the large brown waterproof sheet half under and half over my bedding, and another smaller sheet placed on two sloping sticks against the rock so as to keep the snow off my head.

Dinner was a difficulty under the circumstances. I could not sit upright under the small waterproof without knocking the sticks out of position with my head and letting the snow in amongst the bedding, and as the lantern had been forgotten it was very dark. However, I managed all right by feeling about for my food.

The real trouble was the cooking, which Abdulla accomplished wonderfully, it seemed to me, working as he did, without any shelter, in a regular snowstorm, and contriving to produce, notwithstanding the circumstances, a dinner of soup, roast mutton, potatoes, and stewed apricots!

On the whole I had little to complain of, and putting my waterproof cape at the head of my bed to keep out the snow, which was drifting in on the pillows, I was soon fast asleep.

The men meantime had lit fires under overhanging trees, and got as much shelter as they could, but there was not much to be had, and a very uncomfortable night they must have passed.

I awoke on the 29th to find the waterproofs stiff as boards and entirely covered with snow. I promised the men double pay, and gave them tea and sugar all round; so they were quite content, and very cheerful notwithstanding the discomfort of the night. The ibex, however, had taken the opportunity to clear out altogether, for not a sign of one was visible when we went up the

hill and searched the rocks that morning with our glasses, and we never afterwards saw any of that exceptionally fine herd, which had given us so many weary days' work.

We accordingly came down again to where we had slept, and after breakfast climbed up back to the neighbourhood of our camp. Sending the rest of the men on there, the shikāri, a local coolie, and I waited behind amongst some high rocks, and about 4 P.M. caught sight of a fair-sized ibex lying where a stalk seemed possible. We accordingly went after him over a series of ridges and hollows, all very easy going, and quickly got up to the ridge behind which he had been seen. On topping it, we found him with several others going about uneasily. He was about 70 yards off, and a bullet from the Lee-Metford knocked him over. He recovered himself, and disappeared down the ravine. Following quickly we saw him on the opposite side of a snow-slope, where a bullet through the heart finished him. His horns were not as good as they had looked, being only $31\frac{3}{4}$ inches long.

On the 30th we changed camp, going up the more northern of the two branch nalas above mentioned. The camp went down and followed up the stream, but the shikāri, the tiffin coolie, and I went up by the hillside. A long walk, over easy ground, brought us to some rocks, where we stopped to examine the neighbouring hillsides, and here we had breakfast.

At 2.30 P.M. a small brown bear was descried grazing on a grassy slope about 500 yards off. Until I saw him actually cropping the grass like a cow or goat, I did not realise that bears eat grass, and very curious food it seems

for an animal with such an essentially carnivorous mouth. He allowed us to get within 100 yards, when leaning the rifle against a birch-tree I fired. He swung round to the shot, and then started off at a lumbering gallop apparently uninjured. I opened and closed the breech quickly and pulled the trigger, but there was no report, for I had forgotten to undo the lid that closed the magazine. Rectifying my error, I slipped in a cartridge and fired, but the bear went on. Rapidly letting in another cartridge, I had a third shot just as the animal was topping a rise. This brought him over, and he went rolling out of sight down the hill. When we got up to him he was quite dead, the last bullet having caught him behind the right ear and gone out at the right eye, smashing that side of his skull into fragments. The second shot had been a miss. The first had a curious result.

The animal had been standing when I fired the first time nearly broadside on, but with his left shoulder slightly further away from me than his left quarters. He was a little below the level at which I stood. On examining the body, I found a large hole in the skin, just above where the left hind leg joins the backbone, and a fragment of bone sticking in the skin ; the side of the backbone was splintered up a bit, but there was no injury to the neighbouring tissues, nor was the backbone broken. Apparently the Jeffrey's bullet had split up on impact, as proved by the large hole in the skin, and had then glanced upwards off the backbone, chipping a piece off it, but not doing any other harm. The animal would have gone off, practically uninjured, but for the bullet

through the head, notwithstanding the fact that the first bullet had caught him on the spine.

I thought of the ibex shot on the 19th, which had been apparently hit on a rib off which the bullet had seemed to glance, and here before me was a very similar result, produced by the same weapon and a similar bullet. Knowing what is said as to the terrific force of impact of a Lee-Metford bullet, I wondered greatly at the curious effects produced by those two shots.

The bear only measured 4 feet and half an inch—a small male. We skinned him and then went down to the camp, where a space was cleared with some difficulty amongst the pines, and the skin stretched to dry.

CHAPTER XII

MAY 31 TO JUNE 12—KUTYAL TO MISHKIN

Moved camp—Snow leopard—Failure—Twelfth ibex—Photographs—Moved camp down nala—Barchu—Darsu—Sarsal—Discussion as to route to be next taken—Spare luggage to be sent to Astor—No water on Burme—Rain-water used—March to snow—Blank days—Churi Lāt—Sarkondbāri Lake—Threatened desertion of coolies—Actual desertion at Bunji—Change of route—Maya Dass—Rondu Mishkin.

THE next day, the 31st of May, was a blank. We went up the little nala on the glacier, which was a small scale copy of the one in Jutyal, but without its magnificent surroundings. Only a few females and kids being seen, we settled to move into the southern branch nala on the 1st of June. This we accordingly did, the shikāri, Chānd, a local coolie, and I, starting shortly after dawn.

We had been walking about an hour or so, and were coming close to a small temporary village, occupied during the summer for grazing cattle on the neighbouring hill-sides, when the local coolie quietly remarked, "There's a leopard." We stopped at once, and looking up in the direction the man indicated by his face, I saw a snow leopard[1] lying on a rock. Only his head and a part of his long thick tail hanging down over the rock were

[1] *Felis uncia.*

visible. He was about 250 or 300 yards off, and a good bit above us, as he lay on one of the rocks of a small hill formed of big boulders.

The shikāri said, "Come on as if nothing was seen," and went on quietly till out of sight of the leopard, when we all set off top speed to the village. When we got there, we learned that this leopard had killed a bullock two days before close to the village, had eaten a little the previous night, and had come down to the kill again about dawn, when the village boys had chased it away with stones. This was told us as we took off our boots and chaplis preparatory to a stalk, the shikāri going in his bare feet and I in my socks. We crept up amongst the rocks stealthily, but the shikāri was in too much of a hurry, and I fear we were not as noiseless as if we had gone more slowly; for when we came in sight of the rock he had been seen on, the animal was no longer visible. He must have heard us and jumped silently down, and in that wilderness of rocks pursuit was of course hopeless.

So we went back to the village, and then went to the kill. Very little had been eaten, and from what the boys said of the animal's boldness, it seemed to me likely that it might come out some time during the day. The kill was lying at the edge of a small stream, the opposite side of which was a fairly high grassy bank. There I saw a spot—about 50 yards from the kill—where it struck me I could wait behind a screen; so I had some pine boughs cut down and a screen erected and took my seat, giving orders that as soon as my things came up, the camp was to be pitched in the first convenient spot beyond the village.

It was just half-past eight when I took my seat. Clouds were about, and it rained off and on during the day. After four hours, I made up my mind that the animal would not come out till evening, so I went to my tent and had breakfast. About two o'clock I resumed my watch, and a very cold, wet watch it proved, for numerous thunderstorms broke before evening.

When it was getting dusk and I was becoming hopeless, I suddenly saw a dirty white object moving noiselessly up to the kill, and became aware that the leopard was before me. The animal came on slowly, looking up and around suspiciously several times. I pushed the Lee-Metford softly through the branches of the screen, and endeavoured to bring the sights to bear. But the bead of the foresight was unfortunately white, and when on the body of the leopard, which was also white, disappeared altogether. The screen also tended to obscure the back-sight. I pushed the rifle forwards and pulled it back more than once, endeavouring to get the sights properly aligned, but could not manage it. Meantime the leopard had pulled the kill slightly up the bank, and had sat down facing me, bunched up in a heap just as a cat sits before a fire. Consequently it was in the worst position for a shot, but the light was failing fast, and so taking as good an aim as I could manage under the difficult circumstances, I pressed the trigger. The leopard sprang up the hill and behind a bush in response to the shot, and, slipping in another cartridge, I stood up beyond the screen and took a rapid shot at where I thought he was. He went up the bank, and I fired a third shot as he disappeared amongst the rocks.

On examining the ground there was no blood, and it was pretty clear I had missed. I was naturally awfully disgusted, for a chance at a snow leopard is very rare. If I had anticipated his coming so late, I would have taken up a much nearer position. This was the mistake I made, going too far off; but I was afraid of being too close, lest he might wind or otherwise detect me when approaching the kill, and not come up to it at all.

The next morning, the 2nd of June, having sent the shikāri up the nala, I went to the kill and found that the leopard had been at it during the night; so I had some boughs put up beside a sloping rock about 6 yards from the body of the bullock, and resolved to sit there that evening. It had rained a good deal during the night, and was raining when, after arranging the screen, I started to follow the shikāri up the glen.

When I reached him it was about eight o'clock, and I found him sheltering from the wet under a tree. He had seen nothing, and the mist was too thick to allow us to examine the hillsides properly; so I also took what shelter I could find—a hollowed-out bank of earth as it happened—into which I managed to tuck myself, and waited patiently for the rain to stop. It ceased about eleven o'clock, and then I had my breakfast, after which we saw a herd of ibex with three good males, in the snow rather high up. The wind was shifty, but on the whole favourable, and we resolved to try a stalk. The ibex were far above the snow-line, and amongst some rather precipitous rocks.

We went up a gully well to the left of where the herd was, and found the climb long and steep. Half-way up

snow began to fall, and we must have given our wind in some way to a bear and her cub, for we came on their marks, evidently not many minutes old, as we entered a small birch wood. We followed the track as long as it led us towards the ibex, and then gave it up, for, as the animals were aroused, there was little chance of our overtaking them.

We found the herd where it was impossible to get near it, and so sat down to wait till it should think fit to move. This did not occur till close to 4 P.M., and even then the best male kept watching the others going down without moving himself. We were tired of waiting up there in the snow and numbed with cold, so, though it was risky, we endeavoured to get nearer. The going was terribly bad, over very precipitous and smooth rocks, and it was as much as we could do to get along at all.

When we were about 250 yards from the best male, he detected us, so, as endeavouring to remain unseen was no longer of any use, I sat down and had a shot at him with the .303. The result was a miss, and he jumped down after the others, whom I now saw racing down the hill at top speed. The big buck when he jumped down was momentarily out of sight, so I had a couple of running shots, with the 300 yards' sight up, at the nearer of the other two. At the second shot he stopped suddenly and lay down, and it was evident he was hit. Then the big one came again into view and I had a shot or two at him, but without effect, and he and the remainder of the herd were quickly out of sight.

We then went down to the wounded ibex, and found him leaning against a bank apparently dying. He let

us go up to him and seize him by the horns, though on examination only one bullet-wound could be found, and that had shattered the left forearm without doing any other damage. The head proved to be fairly good, 39½ inches. Then we made haste back to the camp, and I took my seat behind the screen erected in the morning, and waited for the leopard till an hour after dark had passed, but without success.

Next morning, the 3rd, I heard that the leopard had visited the kill again during the night, so I resolved to give it one more chance in the evening. The day proved a blank as far as ibex were concerned, for though we walked up to the very end of the nala we were in, nothing more was seen.

I was greatly struck that day by the size of the avalanches that I saw come down. The air was full of rumbling like distant thunder, and there was hardly a minute, after about eight or nine o'clock, when snow was not somewhere rolling down the mountain sides. In some places the fall was so great that a cloud of what looked like fine white vapour, but which was really snow, would arise and completely conceal for a short time the part of the mountain over which it hung. The accumulations of snow in some of the hollows must have been of enormous depth.

The attempt in the evening to get a shot at the leopard was again unsuccessful, for though I tied up a goat near the kill, he never showed. I think I ought to have slept beside the screen and tried a chance shot at night, but this did not occur to me till I had left the nala.

That night the post coolie brought me a packet I

had long been waiting for, containing films for my kodak. The parcel had left Srinagar, addressed to me at Skardo, on the 8th of April! The post coolie brought with him a local man from Bunji to help in carrying some stores, which my wife had succeeded, after much trouble, in having conveyed to that place for me. Amongst them was the telescope, to which I have already referred, as a thing that I wanted very badly indeed.

On the 4th I told the shikāri to move the tents to the place at which we had halted on the 27th of May, and then spent the morning in taking photographs of the valley and the snow-clad peaks around. The Haramosh peak was everywhere visible, but we were too close under it to get a really good view. There were a couple of pretty little lakelets, surrounded by pine woods and grassy banks, at one side of the glacier; for this branch nala gets very wide a short distance from its junction with the northern branch, and continues so till closed by the snowy slopes which surround the source of its stream. Unfortunately none of these photographs proved successful.

Below the village the glen widens out into an open park-like country, with rolling uplands of short grass, gay with flowers, and with stately cedars, pines, and other trees dotted about. Cattle were grazing on these pastures as I went by, and I wondered at the contrast between this scene and the great glacier, which but a short distance off, was grinding its slow course down its rocky channel.

We had breakfast in a wood above Goru, a small village some miles higher up the nala than Barchu. From

here we struck up the mountain and reached our camp soon after. That night it rained and blew pretty hard, but the tent stood the strain very well and kept me perfectly dry.

The next day, seeing no signs of game, I sent the camp to Barchu with Abdulla, by the direct route along the river, taking a round over the hills myself, as I wanted to photograph some of the places I had been in. With a couple of men I went by the Round Gorge, and the sheep-pens where we had slept on the 22nd, and so down to Barchu. But that day's photographs also were a failure. We saw no game, and only got a drenching for our pains. For the rain came down in sheets near the sheep-pens, and though my waterproof kept my shoulders dry, the rest of me was soaked. The camp was in a little wood on the edge of the stream, not far below the village.

On the morning of the 6th we marched to Darsu, where the Munshi lives who had been assisting me in the matter of supplies and coolies. Darsu is a fine village, one of the best in these parts, with a large amount of land under barley and wheat, and with splendid vines climbing about amongst the apricots and mulberries.

As the road on is a steady descent, the air kept getting hotter and hotter, till, by the time we reached Sarsal, it was very warm indeed, and I was glad to sit down under the apricot trees and have breakfast in the shade.

Most of the time that I was in Bāltistān, I had been much exercised in my mind as to what I should do after finishing with ibex and markhor. I did not know, when

I began, how long it would take me, though if I had had in the beginning the experience I had at the end, I should have been aware that nothing much can be done in the way of getting these goats after, say, the middle of June. The snow having by that date receded far up the mountains there is any amount of open country, and the game can roam over such an extent of ground that it is heart-breaking work trying to follow it. Markhor, too, about that time begin to lie up in the birch woods, where of course it is useless to go after them, as tracking silently would be impossible. They are only outside for a short time in the morning and evening, and it is exceedingly difficult to get a shot. Not knowing all this, I was unable to fix a date for leaving Bāltistān, but had proposed, if I could get away with a good bag in reasonable time, to go on to Leh.

Accordingly I had suggested to my wife that she should ascertain if any ladies were going to Leh, and if so, arrange if possible to accompany them. As it happened, Mr. and Mrs. Beech wished to be in time for the Himis Festival of the 20th of June, and had settled to go with Captain Trench on his annual journey to Leh. They asked my wife to join them, and about the middle of May I learned that this party of four was to start on the 25th of that month. When I found, towards the beginning of June, that I had got a fair number of ibex, but only two bears and one decent markhor, I said to Abdulla that we must go now where some of these latter—in which my bag was very deficient—were to be got. He said that the place to visit was the Burme range, and that I might rely on getting markhor there. From Burme he

suggested going into the nalas between that and Astor, and then, if I must go to Leh, on to the Deosai plains, and so down to Kargil. He was, however, very much opposed to going to Ladāk at all, and wanted me instead, when done with the Astor nalas, to go after black bears in the Lolāb. But I stuck to my point, which was markhor and red bear first, and then whatever I could get on the Leh side.

Not unnaturally, he and the other Kashmiris wanted to get to their homes, which were nearly all in the neighbourhood of Bandipur, and the prospect of turning aside to start for Ladāk was not by any means congenial. Indeed, I have never been quite able to make up my mind as to whether he did not purposely propose the route we went, mainly that he might get to Bandipur. He must have known that the chances of markhor anywhere were then but small, and that most of the nalas beyond the Burme were pretty sure to be occupied, or to have been already shot that season. He probably knew that we could not get on to the Deosai plains so early from the Astor direction. He should, therefore, have recommended returning by Skardo, which would have been the direct route to Leh. But when I suggested this as the quickest way, he admitted the fact, but said we should get no shooting, whereas we were certain of markhor and red bear by the Astor route. This decided me, as I did not want to leave Bāltistān without a couple more markhor and red bears.

It was therefore arranged that the bulk of the baggage (the Cabul tent, heads, skins, and stores) was to be sent round *via* Bunji to Astor with twelve Bāltis in charge of

Sudro, one of the permanent coolies, and that we were to march to the same place with what was absolutely necessary only, by way of the Burme range and the nalas. I knew that, for political reasons, the use of the Gilgit road was forbidden to Europeans, and I did not propose to march on it, for Abdulla had explained that it was possible to get to the Deosai plains without traversing it. There was, however, nothing, so far as I knew, to prevent my

THE MUNSHI OF DARSU (SITTING) WITH LAMBARDARS OF NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES (p. 196).

sending my coolies along it. Accordingly that day, the 6th of June, I divided my baggage into two lots, and handed over one of these to Sudro. The Bāltis were most unwilling to go to Astor, why, I could not quite make out, and there was some difficulty in persuading them. However, by the aid of the Munshi and some of the headmen of the neighbouring villages, the trouble was got over, and the required number of men obtained.

The next morning the Munshi and most of the head-

men (from Shut, Honuspa, Darsu, Barchu, and Sarsal) being present, I inquired whether the shikāri and my other servants had paid for all supplies during the time we had been in the neighbourhood, and on being told that nothing was due, I made the Munshi give a receipt to this effect to Abdulla. I then took a photograph of the six men, much to their amusement, and marched down to the rope bridge.

We had bought a few sheep to take with us, and these were carried across the bridge one at a time. The fore-feet were tied round a man's neck, and the sheep, thus hung over his shoulders, presented a most comic appearance.

We followed the Bunji trail (often ascertainable only by small heaps of stones), on the left bank of the Indus, till we reached the spot where we had camped on the 23rd of April. It was then about 11 A.M., and exceedingly hot, so we all sat down under shady rocks and had breakfast. The only water was that procurable from the Indus, and this was so turbid that I could not see the bottom of my canteen when I was drinking. But it was cold and tasted well that sweltering day.

There being no springs on the Burme range, water, as mentioned before, can there only be obtained from snow. But this had, by the time we wished to revisit those hills, receded far up the ridge, and could not be reached in a single day's march from Sarsal. As the distance rendered a halt necessary somewhere half-way to the snow, we had to take water up with us. So my chargal (small water-skin) was filled, and the mussuk (large water-skin) should also have been filled. But this was carried by

a permanent coolie, and he, with the inveterate laziness of his race, only half-filled it. Consequently we were short of water when we stopped for the night.

About three o'clock we went on, and leaving the river, followed the track by which we had come down on the 23rd of April. To get up as far as possible we continued marching till it was almost dark, and then stopped where a little level ground was found. The coolies, after depositing their loads, scattered to search for rain-water lying in hollows in the rocks. They found some, but not enough, and most of the men must have lain down to sleep thirsty, I am afraid.

Next morning we were all astir long before dawn, as we had to get to the snow-line somehow, and no one knew quite how far we had to go. I had my early tea by the fire-light, and day was just breaking when we started. The shikāri and I reached a small but sufficient patch of snow by 9.30 A.M., and as we had taken the precaution to bring a lightly-laden coolie with us, we sent him back with a load of snow for the other men, who arrived about noon.

It was a pleasant, breezy spot where we stopped, with many flowers. Two or three fine cedars and birches were near the snow patch, and my tent was pitched on the level top of a grassy mound. Far below we could see Sarsal and the bare rocks round Garmpani, and to the north the nalas and hills over which I had been shooting, from Shut to Kutyal, lay stretched out before me. Bunji was shimmering in the heat haze to the west, and Gilgit was just visible to the left of the precipices amongst which I had shot the big markhor.

We had seen a herd of markhor, one or two with fair heads, during the morning, and watched the hillside for some hours in the afternoon, but saw nothing.

Next day, the 9th, was also a blank. Two markhor were seen, but we failed to get within range. They were near a birch wood, into which they went for the day, and when they emerged in the evening it was too late to go after them.

While we were out our tents had been brought on to a narrow ridge, just under the rocks which form the highest point of the range. Here we must have been about 13,400 feet above the sea, as the peak itself is marked as 13,701. The place is locally known as "Churi Lāt."

On the morning of the 10th, owing to gross carelessness on the part of the shikāri in going up to the crest of a ridge, he walked almost into a herd of twelve or fifteen markhor. I was immediately behind, but there was no time for a shot, as, of course, the whole lot were out of sight in no time. The result was that we never saw that herd again. The afternoon search was equally fruitless, and I began to see that when the birch woods are once clear of snow there is little chance of getting markhor.

The ridge at Churi Lāt was so narrow, that standing at the door of my tent I could look down on the rocks of Garmpani on one side and Bunji on the other.

On the 11th we marched along the crest till we were at the edge of the Bunji nala. It was a pretty walk over undulating ground and through woods of cedars and pines, and past a small lake (called Sarkondbāri on the map), evidently formed by rain and melting snow in a saucer-like basin surrounded by grassy peaks. That afternoon

the upper part of the Bunji nala was searched, but nothing seen. No doubt it had already been shot out. The same day while in the nala, Abdulla told me he had overheard our coolies talking about deserting. It seems that they had not really got over their objection to going as far as Astor. And in the nalas before us—Astor Mishkin, Sheltar, Astor Ditchil, Garhi, and others—there was no chance, he said, of getting fresh men. This was a serious matter, as of course without coolies we should be entirely helpless.

When we got back to the tents further bad news awaited us. The post coolie had arrived from Bunji, and he brought word that eleven out of the twelve men who had carried my things out of Sarsal had refused to go any further than Bunji, and had gone back on the 9th. This was very bad news indeed, and following on what Abdulla had told me in the afternoon, necessitated an alteration of my plans. I got up the eleven Haramosh men who were with me, and took down their names, and then got them to tell me the names of the twelve men who had gone to Bunji. By the shikāri's advice I changed my route, and settled to go down on the Rondu side of the range we were on, so that we might be able to get fresh coolies, who were said to be obtainable at Balchu. We could then, Abdulla said, get over to the Astor side by the Ditchil Pass, and thence, as originally arranged, to the Deosai plateau. Our coolies were visibly gratified by the change in our plans, so I felt satisfied about them. To get on the things at Bunji, I settled to send Mahamdu there next day to make what arrangements he could in the

matter of getting porters. If he failed, I determined to send Abdulla back from Astor.

On the 12th we had a very long and trying march, the difficulty of which is not by any means represented by its track on the map. Starting about daybreak with Abdulla, Chānd, and a local coolie, we had a tedious descent into the Maya Dass nala, and then crossed the stream which flows through it. Next followed a rise to a ridge, beyond which we traversed a pleasant meadow-like expanse, with grass and flowers up to our knees. Here we found the tent of a Major Anderson, who was himself out shooting. Then there was a long ascent through pine woods, where the pine needles made the paths very slippery, and when we had surmounted the ridge to which this led, a long and hot descent under a blazing sun to the bottom of the Rondu Mishkin nala.

Meeting one of the inhabitants, we learned that Jebb, whom I had left at Skardo, had been shooting here, and that he had gone further east. We had to go up towards the head of this nala to get over the stream, which I was given to understand could not be crossed lower down in the middle of the day, owing to the amount of water resulting from the snow melting in the heat. Where we crossed it one of the channels of the stream was a mass of black liquid mud, down which rocks were being swept with great force, probably the result of a recent landslip above. A climb over snow brought us to grass and pine woods again, and about half-past eleven we reached a shady wood by a clear stream where we resolved to stop.

It had been a hot and tiring walk, and I was pretty

done, though in fairly hard condition with the constant climbing of the past few weeks. The coolies got in about 3.30 P.M. also badly done up, but a promise of double pay on account of the severity of the day's work made them quite content.

The bough of a birch-tree made a pleasant seat during the day in that breezy wood, and in the evening my tent was pitched in a meadow deep in grass, and brilliant with blue, white, yellow, and purple flowers.

CHAPTER XIII

JUNE 13-27—MISHKIN TO BANDIPUR

Balochi—Hilbu—Ditchil Pass—Garhi—Third red bear—Los—Gilgit road—Godai—Sardar's chowki—Borzil Pass—Great difficulty—The Pass shelter—Minimerg—Mapenun—Olphert's camp—Stay at Mitchell's at Gurais—Rajdiāngan Pass—Major Yielding—Trouble with the Kashmiris—Started by boat.

The following morning (the 13th of June) we began with a long climb in the shade of the hill, meeting the sun when we topped the ridge. A few markhor, females and small males, were descried a long way off, but no other game. A sharp descent led down to Balochi, a pretty village, in which, however, only one or two houses were occupied. The headman was very civil, and brought me some milk. There was a lot of terraced cultivation, but most of the fields were choked with weeds, as the people, for some reason, had gone away elsewhere. Here we had to go down to cross the stream, as the ground was too precipitous higher up. A long descent brought us to the river, and we waded over, the water being as usual painfully cold. On the opposite side we sat down amongst some bushes and had breakfast.

Meantime the stream kept getting deeper with the

melting snow, and I hoped the coolies would come in time to cross, as it would have been awkward if they had been compelled to stop on one side with the things

A PIECE OF GOOD ROAD IN BALTISTAN, NEAR BALCHU VILLAGE (p. 204).

while I was on the other. They turned up about noon and just managed to get over. In another hour they would have been too late, for by that time the river was a regular flood, against which no one could

have stood up. We camped that night, some distance up the hill, on a deserted bit of a formerly cultivated field.

The next day's march (that of the 14th) was a short one, as we had to change coolies at Balchu, a transaction which involved delay. We arrived about 9 A.M., and I had breakfast while the change was being effected, and the accounts of the men leaving us made up. Then I saw them paid off, and climbing a sort of staircase of rocks[1] (a very good road for Bāltistān) got on to the pasture lands of the village, and as rain seemed to be coming on, camped there beside a clear stream. It drizzled during the afternoon, and rained heavily at night.

A long and tedious march next day brought us to Hilbu village, situated far up the Rondu Ditchil nala, and not at all near the place marked with that name on the Atlas of India Sheet No. 27. Here we changed coolies, and that evening camped just below the Ditchil Pass, at the foot of the snow, on a bit of level pasture land covered with flowers.

It seems that both the nalas which run down from the Ditchil Pass are known by that name. One, that in which I was camped, runs north to the Indus, and is therefore on the same side of the range as Rondu. The other goes south-west, the water flowing into the Astor river. Close to my camp I found Jebb's tent and some of his servants, and learned that their master had gone a few days before into a distant nala of which they did not know the name.

On the 16th I crossed the Pass, which was all under soft snow. A short way down on the Astor side we saw a few ibex, but there was not a decent head amongst them.

[1] See illustration on preceding page.

We camped on a flat bit of grass, covered with forget-me-nots, and learned from a herdsman in the valley that a sahib, whose name he did not know, had his tent lower down. At the same time I learned that the next nala, Sheltar, had been taken by another sportsman.

These two nalas being occupied, Abdulla proposed taking the Garhi nala, nearer to Astor, and we set off there next day (the 17th). On the way we met Mahamdu, who had gone down to Bunji on the 12th to arrange about taking on my things which had been abandoned by the Sarsal coolies. When he arrived he found that Sudro had managed to procure transport, and had gone on to Astor. So Mahamdu followed and overtook Sudro, and leaving him at Astor, had come on to meet us.

Just before reaching the Garhi nala we saw the marks of shāpu (uryal) on the hillside, and as Abdulla said they might come down in the evening, we camped at the next place at which water was procurable. But it was of no use, and we saw nothing.

On the 18th we got into Garhi, the things going round below, and Abdulla, Chānd, a local coolie, and I, climbing in over a shoulder of the mountain. At the top we startled a few female markhor, but saw nothing else. We found our camp in the evening pitched by the stream.

On the 19th, giving orders for the camp to follow, the usual four of us went on up the nala, but though we searched carefully and went right up to the semicircle of snow-covered rocks at the end, nothing was seen except a musk deer,[1] which was too far off and in too difficult a place to be worth pursuing.

[1] *Moschus moschifferus.*

Coming back to the camp that night thoroughly tired after a very laborious day, I found it near a spring, about 500 or 600 feet above the snow stream at the bottom of the valley. As there was no level ground large enough for my tent, my bedding, etc., had been arranged in a sort of cave, and the cook had lighted his fire under a neighbouring rock. It was about half an hour from dark, and I had got into my night things, and was preparing to get into bed, when one of the coolies reported a red bear on the opposite hill. I at once slipped on a coat and my boots, and thrusting a few cartridges into my pocket, started off down the hill with the shikāri and a coolie. Knowing that there was very little light, Abdulla recommended waiting till the morning, when he said the bear would be pretty certain to return past the place he was then at, as he was evidently going down the nala to graze on the crops a little distance below. But I felt very doubtful about seeing him again, and thought it best to go for him while we knew whereabouts he was, even though it should be a bit dark when we reached him. So we went tearing down the steep descent, jumping from boulder to boulder, sliding through shale, and pushing through rose bushes and cedar clumps, till we reached the bottom. Here we turned up the nala to cross by a snow bridge, and then went up the opposite side as hard as we could go. The bear had been seen grazing about amongst some small ridges, nearly as high up on the south side of the nala as we were camped on the north, but almost immediately after had disappeared amongst some cedars with which those ridges were studded. So his exact whereabouts could only be surmised as we went up. At the snow bridge I had

loaded the Lee-Metford by filling up the magazine, but for fear of accidents had not put a cartridge in the breech, and had left the lid of the magazine shut down. When about up to the height at which the bear had been seen, we proceeded more cautiously, and began peering about in the twilight amongst the cedars as we came up to the top of each small ridge. We had gone over some two or three of these, when I trod on a dry twig, and the crack sounded ominously loud in the stillness. The next moment, in the comparative gloom made by the dark branches, I heard a rustle in front, and going a step forward, made out a large brown bear standing about 6 yards off, broadside on, with his head turned towards us. I quickly loosened the cover of the magazine, and opening the breech and jamming in a cartridge brought the weapon to my shoulder, and, without attempting to align the sights, which in the darkness would have been impossible, fired at where I concluded the heart should be. The bear with a grunt swung round to the shot and attempted to make off, but falling at once in the effort, went rolling down till brought up by something. We followed and found that he had been stopped by a stump, and was stone dead. Abdulla then proposed that he should be rolled further down, so when he and I had gone lower, so as to stop the body and prevent it from going over the edge into the stream below, the coolie set the bear free, and he came rolling over and over to where we were. We just managed to stop him with our alpenstocks, and then leaving him there, made our way back to the right bank. When starting for the stalk I had told the men to bring the camp down to the neighbourhood of the river, that we

might not have to climb back. So when we got over we heard the men's voices in the darkness coming down the hill. I felt about for a good place for my bed, and having found a fairly level spot, had my bedding unrolled there and lay down. Thus in less than half an hour from the time when the bear had been first seen, the stalk was carried out, the animal shot, the camp changed, and I was lying on my back in bed, looking up at the stars, while the dead bear lay stiffening on the opposite side of the river. It was a piece of unusual luck seeing him at all, and wonderful good fortune being able to bag him before dark.

From what I had seen since I left Sarsal, I had come to the conclusion that there was little use trying any longer for markhor, and ibex I did not want. Apparently getting a bear was a pure matter of chance, though Abdulla said the Deosai plateau was a certain find. My wife, I knew, must have reached Leh by this time, and I thought the best thing I could do would be to leave Bāltistān and try for *Ovis ammon*, and anything else I could get in Ladāk. Bārāsingh I determined not to go after till the winter. I accordingly told the shikāri that night that I would give up the nala next day, and make the best of my way to Deosai.

Next morning (the 20th) I examined the bear before it was skinned, and found that it was a fine male, and measured 6 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the end of the tail to the tip of the nose. The bullet had entered close to the elbow of the left shoulder, and gone out under the right armpit, making, as usual, at exit a larger hole than at entrance. The fur was in good order except near the

two bullet holes, where, owing perhaps to the blood, it had been rubbed a bit by the roll down the hill. The skin was then removed and pegged out, rubbed with alum, and a lui stretched over a tree above it to keep off the sun. Mahamdu was put in charge, with orders not to take out the pegs till evening, when the skin should be dry, and then to follow us to Los, where we proposed to halt. After this we started down the glen, and marched in the direction of Astor.

It was down-hill the whole way to Los, where we stopped for the night, but the sun was on us all the time, and it was a particularly hot and dusty march. The village is a large one, prettily situated on a piece of level ground overhanging the right bank of the Astor river. My tent was pitched on a bit of pasture land under a shady walnut, and fine trees of the same species were dotted about. Astor was visible about a mile higher up the river on the opposite bank.

That evening a curious thing happened. The fields are all irrigated, as is customary amongst these hills, from a mountain stream, and the water can be turned off or on at most points at will. In Los the pastures are extensive, as the people do a flourishing trade in baggage ponies used on the Gilgit road, and it is usual to do the watering of the grass lands at night. When I selected the ground for my tent, I had noticed that one of the small irrigation channels ran across a corner of the patch I chose, but I had not thought any more about it, and when my brown waterproof sheet was stretched out on the floor no sign of the hollow of course appeared. I was sitting writing after dinner, leaning up against the

tent pole as usual, when I was struck by hearing the rippling of water very close, and it then flashed on me that the irrigation system had been set to work, and that water was actually flowing through my tent! Jumping up I hastily removed what was over the channel, and sure enough a little rill was travelling merrily through the tent! A shout quickly brought up the shikāri, and the stream was promptly diverted. So no harm was done, but it was a new experience to have water actually flowing through my tent, and within a foot of the ground on which my bedding was spread.

On the 21st I was lazy, as I had determined to halt, and did not get up till daybreak. The day was spent in arranging the loads, getting ponies, having clothes washed, and sending off letters, etc., to the post-office at Astor. I took the opportunity also to tub, and to mend my boots, which were in need of cobbling. I carried a cobbler's awl, thread, and wax for the purpose, and found them most useful many a time.

The inhabitants of the Astor valley are Dards, a timid race, and it was not without difficulty that I induced three of them, a man and two women, to allow themselves to be photographed. There was nothing special about them except their head-dress. The men wear a curious cloth cap formed of a long woollen bag, the open end of which is rolled up till the closed extremity fits the skull tight. The women wear regular poke bonnets such as were fashionable once with us. Abdulla always wore a Dard cap instead of a turban while stalking, as it was less conspicuous.

On the 22nd we were up at four, and in motion

before five, having secured ponies to carry our baggage. Abdulla went over to Astor and arranged for bringing on the things which were there, but I kept on the right bank of the Astor river. At Naogaon there is a suspension bridge, and the Srinagar-Gilgit road crosses the Astor river. Here I got on that road for the first time,

DARDS OF THE ASTOR DISTRICT.

intending to use it, in accordance with permission obtained from the Gilgit Agency, as far as the Borzil Pass, about 30 miles on.[1]

The going was now, of course, first-class, and as we were getting up towards the source of the Astor river the temperature was delightful, and the scenery varied and lovely. About one o'clock we stopped for break-

[1] I had applied for this permission a short time before.

fast under a fine pine at the edge of the Astor river, which supplied cold clear water.

The ponies passed about 4 P.M., and an hour later I followed them, and found the camp pitched about a mile above Godai, on a grassy patch between the road and the Astor river, near a spring. Being evening the stream was now turbid with melted snow, and the spring therefore an advantage. The distance done from Los was about 18 miles.

I weighed myself before dinner on a Salter's spring balance, and found that I was 11 stone 1 lb., about $2\frac{1}{2}$ stone lighter than when I started from India. This was too much of a reduction, and should have warned me that there was something wrong, but I thought nothing of it, and had to pay afterwards for my folly.

On the 23rd we had a short march of 13 miles, through charming scenery, to Sardar's chowki, where I learned that it would be impossible, owing to fresh snow above the Borzil Pass, to get up to the Deosai plateau. People we met told us this, and it became necessary once more to reconsider our route. So I resolved to halt next day, and see what could be arranged.

I spent a great part of the 24th endeavouring to devise a way of getting to Deosai. The route involved going up from the Borzil to the north-east, and the pony-men said that with fresh snow there would be no grazing for their animals for over two marches, and it would be impossible to go. What they really wanted, I felt sure, was to reach Bandipur, where the road to Gilgit practically commences, in order to get employment again for the journey back, so I am pretty

certain they made the most of the difficulty. My own men, too, who, as already stated, were almost all from that neighbourhood, were in reality as much against me as the pony owners, for they concluded that if I failed to get across the Deosai, I should be obliged to go through Bandipur, and they would have a day at their homes. They, however, showed no sign of this, and pretended to assist me in inducing the pony-men to march to the plateau. In the end, as may be supposed, I had to give way to this opposition, and settled to go *via* Bandipur, and so by the Zogi Lā.[1] But I resolved that if I had to go thus out of my direct route I would travel fast, which I certainly did, for, from this on, we generally kept going from daybreak till within an hour or so of dark.

We were all up half an hour after midnight on the morning of the 25th. As a matter of fact the shikāri, not guessing the hour correctly, had called me at 11.30, and I had not gone to sleep again.

We started in the starlight for the Borzil Pass by half-past one, going thus early in hopes of finding the snow hard before the sun rose. But we were doomed to disappointment. A little before daybreak, about four o'clock, the ponies got into deep snow, and began sinking up to their stomachs, and floundering helplessly about. We tried to urge them forward at first, but it was quickly apparent that, with their loads, they could not get on. So all the baggage was taken off, and the pony-men and servants proceeded to carry it to the top of the Pass. In this work all assisted, even Abdulla and

[1] The circumstances of the case rendered it impossible for me to apply for permission to use the Gilgit road between the Borzil Pass and Gurais.

Ramzāna picking up loads, while I drove the herd of ponies.

The distance to the top was about a quarter of a mile. A rough stone shanty stood, we found, on the summit, which is 10,740 feet above the sea. Judging by the odour that greeted me on peering into one of the rooms, it must have contained a dead bullock or pony, I did not stay to ascertain which. But I learned later that this was not so. The smell proceeded from skins, which had been taken off the pack animals lost in the great blizzard the year before, and which had been put there to dry. A few coolies were cooking on the floor of another room, which was littered with the remains of fire and other *débris*.

Around the building all my loads were collected by 5 A.M., and then the business of taking them down the opposite side began. As we heard from men coming up the southern side, that the snow was harder and not so deep there as on the northern, the ponies were laden, though but lightly, the men taking loads as well. As everything could not be carried at once, I stayed behind and spent a cold couple of hours waiting, till some of the men returned from their two-mile tramp to the nearest bit of road free from snow. Then I went down with them and the balance of the things to this spot, and here the ponies were fully loaded up once more.

About a mile below the summit, and on the southern side, I noticed a curious structure—a sort of shelter—for use when deep snow covered the ground. It consisted of a tiny wooden house—apparently with one room—erected on large piles. The floor I took to be over 25 feet above the ground. A ladder gave access to the door.

It enables some idea to be formed of the snowfall in this part of the world, when a shelter has to be built so high, to keep it from being buried by the winter storms.

The road we were on had been partially cleared by the traffic, for the work of provisioning Gilgit for the next cold season had begun, but for some miles the ground on each side was deep under snow, and the stream, which here began to accompany us, ran mostly under ice bridges. At intervals the remains of the unfortunate pack animals, destroyed, to the number it is said of over 300, by the great blizzard of the preceding year, cropped up out of the snow, and we disturbed many kites and vultures as we passed.

The ground was almost clear of snow by the time we reached the Borzil storehouse, and from there onwards we got more into summer with every mile that we went down, the valley more densely wooded, and the pastures deeper in grass and brighter with wild flowers. At Minimerg, where there is a telegraph station, I sent a wire to my wife at Leh. There is no village at Minimerg, nothing but the few huts of the telegraph people on a small grassy plain at the edge of the Borzil river.

I shall long remember that picturesque spot. The left side of the valley—facing the north-west—was thickly wooded almost up to the snow-line, and the opposite side, to my right, consisted of grassy hills covered with splendid pasture and brilliant with flowers. Grazing pack animals (ponies and bullocks) were scattered about in places. The wild flowers were something wonderful. I do not think I have ever seen such profusion of colour in a meadow before, or wild flowers

of such luxuriant growth. When I stepped off the road I was often standing nearly up to my waist in masses of the richest colour. The scent on the summer air was delicious, and brought back, with a vividness which seems peculiar to odours, recollections of English meadows on a bright summer's day.

I had my breakfast beyond Minimerg, in a shady wood at the edge of a rapid stream, where the ponies passed me. In the afternoon I walked on and found the camp about a mile on the Gurais side of Mapenun. The map gives the day's journey as some 23 miles, but the amount of ground covered must have been really much more. Including the mid-day halt, we were travelling for some eighteen hours.

On the 26th we were up in the moonlight by 3 A.M. That morning I came on an English camp close to the roadside, and found it belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Olphert, who were on their way to Gilgit.

Though I had not come across them before, my wife had met them in Srinagar, so I knew them by name. Accordingly I introduced myself, and was glad to see a white face, and to hear English spoken again after an interval of nearly two months and a half.

After a cup of tea and a most welcome cigar, I walked on to Gurais, some 13 miles from our last camp, and there looked up the Mitchells, with whom we had marched part of the way coming into Kashmir. They very hospitably put me up for the night, while my things went on to Kanzitwān.

There was, I knew, a route from Gurais *via* Tilail, which would have brought me out near Drās, but

Abdulla had consistently maintained that the track was bad and involved a difficult Pass. I had suspected that this was false, and only said, so as to induce me to go through Bandipur; but knowing that if the Kashmiris were forced to go *via* Tilail they would probably turn rusty, and delay me more that way than if I went by Bandipur, I had not pressed the point. At Gurais, however, I learned that a sportsman had recently arrived from Drās, and reported the track a good one! The incident did not improve my opinion of the Kashmiri.

Gurais is a pretty spot, a broad valley some five miles long and in parts a mile wide, on the left bank of the Borzil river. Two visitors to Kashmir were camped here, the place being a favourite resort in the hot weather. The village is a very large straggling one, formed, like all others in this side neighbourhood, of log-huts, and boasts a post-office and telegraph station.

That was a day of wonderful luxury. After the couple of months of rough camping, it was quite curious to sit on a chair at a civilised table, to see bright silver and polished knives, and a tablecloth, and lamps with shades. The tent I was given looked, too, so luxurious, with a bed, and sheets, and a toilet-table with a white cover, and a pincushion! Also the smoking was very pleasant. I am one of those unfortunate men, the steadiness of whose hand is affected by tobacco; when I want, therefore, to use a rifle well I always have to give up smoking, so, to insure freedom from temptation on this expedition, I had left my tobacco in Srinagar. Naturally, therefore, I thoroughly appreciated Mitchell's cigars.

On the 27th I did not start till after breakfast, as

Mitchell had kindly promised to lend me ponies, and I did not want to get to Bandipur till evening. Taking it easy, I rode over the Rajdiāngan Pass (11,800 feet), and then walked down, leading the pony, to Trāgbāl, a summer resort of some residents of Kashmir. Here I arrived about 4 P.M., and looked up an old school-fellow in Major Yielding, the commissariat officer. As we had not met since we were boys there was a good deal to say, but time was limited, and, promising ourselves a longer talk when we met in Srinagar, I hastened on.

By evening I reached Sunerwein, 33 miles from Gurais, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles short of Bandipur. Here I found that my things had only just arrived. On the previous day I had told the shikāri and cook to get ponies, and go on quickly to their homes, and then meet me at Bandipur on the Woolar Lake in the evening, and have a boat ready to start that night for Mānasbal, where the road to Leh leaves the neighbourhood of the Jhelum river. When I arrived, however, I found that, though the boat had been engaged, the two men had not been to their homes, or said they had not been, and wanted leave to go then. This disobedience of orders was very annoying, and I saw that they wanted to force me to halt for the night. But I was resolved not to do so, and finally told them that, if they went to their homes, they must make their own arrangements to meet me at Mānasbal at dawn next day. To this they reluctantly agreed and departed.

I here dismissed Chānd and three of the other permanent coolies, keeping Jamāla, whom I had sent on to Srinagar for some things, and Mahamdu, whose

home was not near Bandipur. I was glad to get rid of these four. They were a lazy lot, and I could easily have done without them all through. The real work of the camp—the cutting of wood and fetching of water and cleaning of vessels—had been always done by the Bāltis or other temporary coolies, and the loads of these Kashmiris had been gradually reduced day by day, till when we got ponies they practically carried nothing at all.

Then I went on board the boat, whereupon the boatmen, who were also Kashmiris, began to raise difficulties. Mānasbal, I knew, was only about six hours by water from Bandipur, but the men said they could not get there till 4 P.M. the following evening. I insisted on starting at once, and they said it was dangerous to cross in the dark the arm of the Wular Lake that had to be traversed. I knew there was a substratum of truth in this, and so consented to wait till the moon rose. But I was obliged to engage four more boatmen, and had, of course, to agree to pay them at double the right rate. Mahamdu cooked a few chupatties and heated a tin of army rations for my dinner; but the result of all the worry and trouble caused by the Kashmiris was that I did not dine till close on eleven o'clock.

There were several horns and skins which were to be sent on to Srinagar, also the 80-lb. tent, socks for grass shoes, and other things not required in Ladāk. These I had put into separate loads some days before, and now handed over to the boatmen to be conveyed to Srinagar, to which place they were going after dropping me at Mānasbal. The horns and skins were to go to the skinman I employed, and the other articles to Bāhar Shah.

CHAPTER XIV

JUNE 28 TO JULY 18—MĀNASBAL TO SANGTHA

Mānasbal—Mulberries—Gāgangair—Bāltāl—Zogi Lā—Broken bridge below Machahoi—Pāndrās—Drās—Duldul—Kharbu—Kargil—Darchik—Hiniscoot—Lāmāyuru—Saspul—Bāzgo—Phyang Serai—Leh—European community—Ladāk game—Programme—Tents—Servants—Furniture—Tiffin-basket—Supplies procured—Amritsar merchant—Aligarh butter—Buddhist monasteries—Libraries—Rombiabagh—Fowls—Heat—Upshi—Miru—Gya—Tagalang Pass—Mountain-sickness—Debring—Nomad's huts—Tent sewed up—Violent yāks—Milking goats—March to Sangtha.

Dawn of the 28th of June found us being towed along the Jhelum, and by 9.30 A.M. we were at Mānasbal, where I found the shikāri and cook waiting. The former was excessively sulky, and had made no arrangements for coolies. My arrival, however, hurried him up, and by noon we had started. It was very hot marching in the sun, and I was glad to sit down about 2 P.M. and have my breakfast under some fine mulberry-trees loaded with fruit. I ate a good many, and the coolies also had a great feed. The mulberries were particularly fine. We reached Mangām by 3 P.M., and I was going on, but learning that there was a shop in the neighbourhood from which some supplies which were required could be procured,

I resolved to stop for the night. It was quite cool and pleasant after sunset. The previous night, too, on the water had proved very cool, and I was not annoyed by a single mosquito—a thing which surprised me a good deal.

On the 29th we made a long march of about 25 miles, going as far as Gāgangair, and using pony transport, which I succeeded in obtaining from this on, the whole way to Leh. At Gāgangair I found Major and Mrs. Hughes-Hallett encamped, and had a pleasant dinner with them. Next morning a walk of 10 miles through the loveliest scenery of the Sind valley brought me to Sonamerg. Here I made the acquaintance of Mr. Lewes of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who was encamped in the neighbourhood, and who hospitably gave me breakfast and lunch. About 3.30 P.M. I walked on 10 miles to Bāltāl, at the foot of the Zogi Lā, through more pretty scenery. Very different everything looked that afternoon, from what the appearance had been when I went the same route at the end of March. Then nothing but snow was visible, and an icy wind was blowing down the Pass. At the end of June everything was green, and the hillsides covered with flowers. There was no snow except on the highest peaks and in a few shady hollows, and high up on the mountain sides groups of grazing ponies were to be seen, whose owners were camped below cooking their evening meal.

The next day's march (1st of July) took us over the Zogi Lā. The road ascends by a zigzag above the gorge, the latter forming the path at other seasons when it is full of snow. A little frozen snow was crossed in a few places, and there was some lying on the watershed

where the Drās river takes its rise, but elsewhere green grass and wild flowers were to be seen.

About a mile or two beyond Machahoi the road descends into a wide plain, which, when I arrived, was dotted all over with grazing yāks, ponies, and bullocks, while a lot of merchandise in bales lay heaped up in various places. In the shelter formed by the heaps of bales groups of men were sitting, some smoking, some eating. It was then about 10 A.M., and I was a good deal surprised to see the traffic on the road suspended, as by general consent, at so early an hour.

On making inquiries, I found that a bridge over a snow stream which crossed the road had been broken two evenings before by a sudden rise of the water. On going to the spot, I saw some six or seven men piling up stones to make a foundation for the trestles. They had been sent from Drās that morning, I was told, and they expected, they said, to finish their job by evening, or next day. Hearing that there was a way round over a snow bridge, I resolved to investigate it, but first stopped to get my breakfast.

About 11.30 A.M. I went along the path I had been told of, but found that it was impracticable for laden ponies. So I returned, resolved to make the lazy travellers I had seen sitting amongst their bales get up and lend a hand at mending the bridge, a bit of work which was for the benefit of all. Abdulla had arrived with the baggage ponies while I was examining the road to the snow bridge, so sending him off to collect men at one place, I went to do the same at another. I left one man at each encampment, but turned every

one else out, and soon had a gang of fifty or sixty men at work, carrying stones, piling sods, etc. By 2.30 P.M. the job was complete, and all my baggage across.

Notwithstanding the loss necessitated by the delay, the greater number of the men we found encamped were prepared to sit idle where they were, till the Drās gang of half a dozen coolies had effected the repairs, although it was apparent that if all had chosen to assist the business was only a matter of a couple of hours.

We reached Pāndrās by dusk that evening and camped there, having covered some 20 miles. But for the delay at the broken bridge we should probably have got to Drās.

The 2nd was a long day. Arriving at Drās early, I changed a note for Rs.100 with the local shopkeeper, and walked on. I breakfasted at Duldul, and took a photograph of the premises the Rentons and I had occupied that snowy day in April when we were last there. Little Kharbu was reached just before dusk, after a journey of some 32 miles.

On the 3rd we started as usual by dawn, Abdulla riding ahead to Kargil, where ponies had to be changed, to have fresh animals ready. The latter part of this walk, which ended about 9.30 A.M., was exceedingly hot. The Indus valley in the summer, notwithstanding its elevation, is apparently nowhere cool outside of Tibet.

I found a sportsman here, Mr. Willcox of the 5th Lancers, waiting for his things to turn up. He was returning to India from shooting in one of the nalas on the road to Leh, and had done well, having got twelve ibex.

A large number of letters and papers awaited me at

Kargil, and I was occupied some time in dealing with them. After breakfast we went on, I riding this time, as the day was very hot. We found ourselves about 6 P.M. at Darchik (or Dharkat), a small village about 6 miles short of Mulbekh, which is the regular halting-place, and it was then too late, I thought, to go on, so we halted. We must have covered over 24 miles, but that is the distance shown on the map. The only place I could find for my tent was a small piece of stony waste surrounded by barley fields, with an irrigation channel close by. The men found shelter in the courtyard of one of the houses of the village.

Next morning (the 4th) we were up by moonlight as usual, and off a little after dawn. We reached Kharbu, where ponies were to be changed, about 11 A.M., so I stopped and had breakfast under a tree. The headman vowed he had only three ponies; I wanted five for baggage and two for riding. After some insistence the full number were produced, and the loads changed. That evening we got as far as Hiniscoot, having done about 26 miles, and camped for the night.

I was sick of this wearisome road, and tired of the monotony of marching slowly with the baggage animals, so determined to make a push for it. Accordingly, on the morning of the 5th Abdulla and I started by 3.30 A.M. The shikāri rode one pony, which carried my bedding and some clothes; I rode another, with my tiffin basket and some other necessaries tied up in my Kashmir blanket and slung across the saddle. The seat was thereby rendered very uncomfortable, but it could not be helped.

It was bright moonlight and we could see very well.

We reached Lāmāyuru at a quarter to seven, 8 miles from Hiniscoot, and tried to get fresh ponies, but failed. So we gave a feed to the animals we had, and rode on to Nurla, 13 miles further.

There we got fresh animals, while I had breakfast under a tree. At two o'clock we went on, and reached Saspul, 13 miles from Nurla, by dusk.

Here I put up in a room which is said to be reserved for European travellers. It looked on to the ordinary Serai, which was full of native travellers and ponies and bales of goods, but was clean, being the first rest-house I had seen since leaving Srinagar which could be so described. The man in charge of the Serai gave me some chopped straw, on which I spread my bedding, and brought me some cold water in an inverted "tao" (iron pan used for cooking chupatties), in which I washed my hands and face. The room boasted a table and rickety chair, and these I used at my dinner which consisted of a tin of army rations, chupatties, and jam. I had brought a couple of pieces of candle, so was well off in the matter of light. Curious to relate, though the room was on an upper story, the floor was baked mud.

Next morning (the 6th) we were off by 3 A.M. The road lay up a narrow defile and the moon was consequently of little use. By the time we reached Bāzgo, 9 miles on, day had broken, and we got into Nimu about 7 A.M. Here we tried to change ponies, but the animals produced were so miserable, that we preferred to keep those we had; so we took them a further stage to Phyang Serai, where we arrived about 10 A.M. Here

we had breakfast and a couple of hours' rest, and then rode on with fresh animals to Leh, which we reached at 2 P.M., having covered 29 miles from Saspul. I found my wife encamped in the compound of an empty house belonging to the Roman Catholic Mission, a capital place with shady trees.

The European community at Leh was quite a large one when I arrived there. Besides the permanent residents, consisting of several Moravian missionaries, there was Captain Chenevix-Trench, the British Joint Commissioner, who spent four or five months every year in Ladāk. The visitors were unusually numerous, and consisted of Mr. Church and his two friends, the Phelps brothers, all three buying ponies and making other arrangements for starting for Yarkand. Church wanted to go north-east from there, to get specimens of the stag found in those regions, and his friends proposed making for the Pāmirs and getting *Ovis poli*. These eventually carried out their intention;[1] but Church, learning that a rebellion against China was going on in the tract he had intended to visit, changed his mind and resolved to go into Tibet *via* Changchenmo to get wild yāk. My old companions in tribulation, Mr. and Mrs. Renton, were also there. They had had fair ibex shooting in the Shigar direction, north-east of Skardo, and had been out after uryal in Ladāk. Colonel Turnbull, who had been, like myself, shooting in Bāltistān, was there arranging to go on to Hanlè for *Ovis ammon* and Tibet gazelle. Lastly, there was Colonel Cherry, who

[1] They got seventeen rams, averaging 52 inches; one was 56″ and one was 55″. They were actually shooting for only 11 days.

got in the day after me, and was travelling simply to see something of the country.

The kind of game I wanted in Ladāk was of six kinds: *Ovis ammon*[1] (nyan), Tibet gazelle[2] (goa), Tibet antelope[3] (hiran), uryal[4] (shāpu), burhel[5] (nāpu), and yāk;[6] and I had long conversations, as to where I should go to get these beasts, with the various sportsmen at Leh, and especially with an old Ladāk official, a native of the country, named Palges. This old gentleman gave me a good deal of information, and from him and others I gathered that, for yāk and Tibet antelope I must go to Changchenmo, for Tibet gazelle to the ground between Gya and Hanlè, while burhel and uryal were procurable in the Rumbok and other nalas close to Leh. The main difficulty was about *Ovis ammon*, good heads of which were now very rare, and no one could tell me where I should go to find these sheep. Palges thought my best chance would be in the Kharnak neighbourhood, though even there it seemed doubtful if I should see anything worth shooting. A friend had recommended me to visit the nalas south-east of Shushal for *Ovis ammon*. The yāk bulls are said not to enter the Changchenmo valley till August, and though that is a little late for antelope, which are believed to be leaving for Tibet about that time, I thought I would chance getting them then. Accordingly the programme I laid out was as follows:—I would try for *Ovis ammon* near Kharnak first, and then make for Shushal, getting if possible a couple of

[1] So called by sportsmen; the correct name is, I am informed, *Ovis hodgsoni*.
[2] *Gazella picticaudata*. [3] *Pantholops hodgsoni*. [4] *Ovis cycloceros*.
[5] *Ovis nahura*. [6] *Bos grunniens*.

goa *en route*. After this I would go to Changchenmo, and then return to Leh for the uryal and burhel. This seemed to take me over the most likely ground, and with decent luck I hoped to get five out of the six varieties I wanted. Yāk, I felt very doubtful about, as, from what I could learn, a bull had not been seen in the Kugrang (the main yāk nala of Changchenmo) for many years.

As our arrangements were now very different from those which had characterised my trip alone to Bāltistān, it would be well to describe them here, that future references may be understood.

My wife had brought with her the Kashmir tent she had been using in Srinagar, and this we took with us. With everything complete it weighed about $3\frac{1}{2}$ maunds (282 lbs.), and formed a light load for a yāk. It had two flies and the bathroom was under the inner, which was the main reason why we chose a tent of this type. In cold tracts, such as we were about to visit, the matter is of some importance. The inner fly, including the bathroom and walls for tent and bathroom, weighed 88 lbs. The outer fly with the outer kanāts[1] weighed 72 lbs. These two flies, therefore, by themselves made a light load for a pony. Not being certain whether I should be able to get pony or yāk carriage everywhere, and to provide for the possibility of having to use coolies, I had caused the inner walls to be made detachable from the inner fly, which prevented the tent being as warm as it would otherwise have been, owing to the way the wind got in at the lacing. Consequently, as noticed

[1] Tent walls.

later on, I had the walls stitched to the inner fly the first time we halted for a day. There was a spare kanāt for enclosing the verandah, where we generally had our meals. Besides this I took as a bathroom for myself the sowar's pāl I had been using in Bāltistān, and for the servants the tent of the same size my men had used, as well as a large pāl my wife had hired in Srinagar.

RUPSANG, THE LADĀK SHIKĀRI.

In the way of servants we had the two Hindustanis (Hāde Hosein and the sweeper) we had brought with us from India, Ramzāna my Kashmiri cook, and Mahamdu. We also engaged, in place of Jamāla, who wanted to leave, an Argun called Abdul Karim. The Arguns are a Mahomedan caste peculiar apparently to the neighbourhood of Leh, and are the children of such Yarkand Mahomedan traders as have married Ladāk women. Our Argun was a useful man, but too quarrelsome. He got on badly with the other servants and deserted us at Shewl. On the recommendation of Palges, I engaged Rupsang, a Ladāk shikāri, who, as a native of the country, would,

I thought, be useful in procuring information about game from the nomads. He knew very little Hindustani, but enough to act as interpreter. His Hindustani had only one tense—the past—and it was therefore sometimes difficult to follow him, when he intended himself to be understood as referring to the present or the future.

In the way of furniture we carried two camp beds, three folding chairs, three very small folding-tables, one india-rubber bath, and two washhand-basins with wooden stands. One basin was enamelled iron, and had a leather cover, which was fastened on by buckle and strap, and in it were carried soap, a small towel, comb and brushes, etc. The other was the rickety thing I had used in Bāltistān.

One of the most useful things we had with us was a tiffin-basket of English make fitted for four. We had slightly improved on the original fittings, by adding two iron enamel ware cups and saucers, and an electro-plate teapot, with a folding handle, containing canisters for tea and sugar. The teapot was procured from Sunder Lal, electro-plater of Agra, and was most convenient. Everything required for breakfast was contained in the tiffin basket, except a kettle and frying-pan, which were fastened on outside or carried in his hand by the tiffin coolie, who was a man engaged for this special purpose each day we marched.

From the 6th to the 12th I was engaged deciding on the course to pursue, and making the necessary arrangements. Wheat had to be obtained and ground into flour for our own use, and a supply of atta (wheaten whole meal) bought for the servants, and all packed in

bags for the journey. No supplies, except sheep and milk, are obtainable in the interior of Ladāk, and consequently everything else had to be taken with us from Leh. As two other expeditions (those of Captain Welby and Captain Deasy) had a short time before left for China, one of which had taken amongst other things 200 maunds (over 7 tons) of atta, there was some difficulty and delay in getting all we wanted. As an instance, I may mention that one sportsman, while we were there, bought up the entire stock of onions in Leh, and we could get none.

Curious to relate, we found at Leh a Hindu merchant from Amritsar, called Mohan Lal, who had a shop with all sorts of tinned provisions, candles, oil, lamps, stationery, and even wines, spirits, and tobacco. More than once when we were in the interior we were glad to supplement our supplies from his stores, and found his prices most moderate and his commodities excellent. He also very civilly took charge of some boxes we did not want to take round with us, and kept them safely till our return.

Butter we obtained from Aligarh in the North-West Provinces. Mr. Keventer, whose large dairy farm at that station is now so well-known, sent us by parcel post a one-pound tin of fresh butter twice a week; and notwithstanding the length of the journey, and frequently a long detention at Leh, it always reached us in capital condition. We had mentioned this butter to Church, and he took some with him across the frontier, the first time probably that Mr. Keventer's butter was ever used in Tibet.

Part of our spare time at Leh was spent in visiting some of the Buddhist monasteries in the neighbourhood. We saw three, including the one situated on the high hill[1] immediately overlooking Leh. Their main distinguishing feature was dirt, and the second most striking point was smell. Each had a sort of altar, on which were sometimes images of the Buddha, but more frequently idols apparently borrowed from Hindu mythology. In one Gompa (as the place of worship in each monastery appears to be called) there were figures of demons painted black and made as terror-inspiring as possible. In all there were lights burning before the altars, mostly a small wick of cotton inserted in a bowl of ghi.[2] The bowls were sometimes 2 feet across, and of proportionate depth. The lights were supposed to be kept burning night and day. The bowls I saw had been recently filled, the date being contemporaneous with the Himis festival of the middle of June. They are supposed to be filled once a year, but I expect amongst such a slipshod race the rule is not very carefully observed. The most curious thing, as it seemed to us, about these Gompas was the library. Each had a set of shelves set apart for sacred books, printed from blocks, many of which we saw. Each block was a piece of wood about 18 inches long by 4 inches wide, and half an inch thick. The work of carving the sentences on these blocks must have been very tedious. The printing was done on coarse paper, and the books were tied up between slips of wood, much in the same way as the Burmese leaf-books are tied together. In a side-room of the Monastery on the high

[1] See illustration, p. 233.

[2] Clarified butter.

LEH, WITH PITAK HILL IN THE DISTANCE, FROM THE MONASTERY ABOVE (p. 232).

hill over Leh, there was a huge image of the Buddha made of wicker-work, covered with painted plaster, seated in the orthodox cross-kneed attitude. The figure was over 20 feet high as it sat. The foot which I measured was 5 feet long.

On the 13th of July we started for *Ovis ammon* ground by marching 11 miles to Rombiabagh in the Indus valley. Our transport consisted of fifteen ponies. My wife, who of course had her own saddle with her, rode this and all subsequent marches. I walked that morning and indeed almost always, but occasionally took a pony, when the road was peculiarly monotonous or long. My wife had collected with some difficulty sixteen fowls to bring on with us, as none are procurable after leaving Leh. To carry them I had had a wooden crate constructed by a Leh carpenter, but the workmanship was so very bad that the thing broke, about 3 miles out of Leh, while being carried by a coolie, and in a few minutes all the fowls were running about amongst the rocks. After some trouble and delay, and with the aid of most of our servants and pony-men, they were caught. Some were put into a spare basket, and the remainder distributed to different men to carry in their hands. As it happened, all this trouble was for nothing. The fowls proved unable to stand the cold of the higher altitudes they were taken to, and got so thin, that it became apparent, to adopt an Irish way of putting it, they would die if they were not killed; so the lot were sacrificed one day, and tougher fowls we never tried to get through.

We reached Rombiabagh about half-past eleven, and found the last hour exceedingly hot. Church, who was

starting for Tibet, came with us, as this was on his route. When the sun went down there was a delightful balmy breeze. I did not require a blanket till near dawn, when I pulled one over me.

We had a bad day on the 14th. To avoid the heat we started at half-past five in the morning, and reached the Marshillong bridge over the Indus about eight. Here we parted from Church, who kept along on the right bank while we crossed over to the left. We stopped for an hour at the Marshillong rest-house, and had some tea in a sort of verandah room. About half-past nine we left for Upshi (9 miles off and 20 from Rombiabagh), where we did not arrive till just one o'clock. The road runs along a rocky and sandy track without a particle of shade, and the heat was excessive. Hāde Hosein, the khidmatgar, became faint from fatigue and heat, and lay down under a rock till we sent a pony back from Upshi to bring him in. Our tent was pitched in a pleasant grove, close to the point where the Gya river falls into the Indus. The hot day was succeeded by a delightfully cool and pleasant evening, and we greatly enjoyed our dinner outside our tent under the trees.

On the 15th we left the hot Indus valley, and marched up the Gya stream to Miru, where we found the Beeches encamped. Beech was out shooting, but we spent a pleasant day with Mrs. Beech, and about 5 P.M. started for Gya, to which place our things had meantime gone on, and where we arrived about dusk, having covered some 14 miles.

The whole of the march up the Gya river was

delightful. That pretty but insignificant stream flows in a narrow defile, except at Miru, where the gorge widens sufficiently to allow of some cultivation and the establishment of a village. The rocks at each side are all shades of brown, terra-cotta, purple, mauve and brick red, without a particle of vegetation except near the river in sheltered corners, the colours standing out brilliantly in the wonderfully clear air. The patches of vegetation were generally marked by a few rose-bushes, so covered with flowers that the leaves were hardly seen, and each tree looked like a mass of pinky red standing often 6 or 8 feet high.

We changed our baggage ponies for yāks at Gya, these latter animals being the kind used for transport purposes by the Champa[1] nomads of the Rupshu district, where we were now going. Gya was the last settled village we were likely to see for many a day,—that is, the last village with houses and cultivation. It boasts a single tree, and we did not see one again till we reached Shushal on the 15th of August.

A misprint in our copy of Ince's *Guide to Kashmir* resulted on the 16th in very unpleasant consequences. That generally accurate work gives the distance from Gya to Debring as 12 miles, and we started gaily about half-past six in the morning, thinking we had a very easy journey before us. Our route lay up the Gya river, and it became evident, after a while, that there was an error somewhere, for we continued rising gently for over four

[1] The Champas of Rupshu are a peculiar race. They consider that Leh, which is 11,000 feet above the sea, lies too malariously low to be visited with impunity, except in winter. The elevation of their own valleys is about 14,000 to 16,000 feet.

hours, and it was not till eleven o'clock that we arrived just below the summit of the Tagalang Pass (18,042 feet).

Our lunch-basket and servants were then a long way behind, and we thought that Debring must be close below the Pass on the other side, and that we had better make for it at once. So we climbed to the top, and then perceived that Debring was still several miles away. We here got our first attack of mountain sickness, an ailment that few escape who get up to considerable altitudes. We found ourselves getting headaches when nearing the Pass, and ought at once to have stopped for breakfast, so as to have had a meal before crossing. If we had taken this precaution, we should probably not have suffered at all, for we were not affected when crossing the Marsemik Lā into Changchenmo some weeks later (though that Pass is higher than the Tagalang), simply, we believed, because we took breakfast before going over. As it was, our headaches increased as we went up, and we were in sorry plight when we began the descent. There was no use stopping at the top for breakfast, as there was no water anywhere, and we therefore had to continue going down till, about noon or a little after, we struck the stream that supplies the Champas of Debring. Here we waited, trying to shelter ourselves from the cold wind behind some tramsa[1] bushes, till the tiffin basket and servants turned up about an hour later. We were feeling too bad to have much breakfast, but we had a little tea and stayed where we were till evening. All the servants were suffering from bad headaches also,

[1] See description on p. 245.

and every one was pretty miserable. About six o'clock my wife and I crawled into Debring, which is simply a nomad's encampment, and found our tent just pitched.

Here we found Major Morland, but we were feeling too ill to partake of the tea he had thoughtfully provided against our arrival. He gave us, however, some chloride of potash tabloids, which are considered a specific for mountain sickness, and they seemed to do our headaches good. Morland was the sportsman who had taken the Baralungma nala in Bāltistān, and whom I nearly overtook during that hurried march from Skardo. My wife had met him in Leh, and he had seen our servants come in and pitch our tent. When our things were fairly straight I went over to his encampment, and he showed me a splendid *Ovis ammon* head he had got near Sangtha. It was 48 inches round the curve by 18½ in girth round the base.

The real distance from Gya to Debring is about 22 miles, not 12.

Owing to the bad time we had all had the day before, I thought it best to halt at Debring on the 17th. It was well for other reasons too that we did, for it enabled us to answer our letters, which reached us about noon, the first post we had had since leaving Leh. I had arranged that the Wazir, or head native official at Leh, should take delivery of our mail of the 13th and 14th, and send it on to us by a coolie, and this he had done. That evening the same coolie started back with a receipt for the mail he had brought, and accompanied by a Debring man, who took the letters we had ready, and

was to bring back whatever might have accumulated in Leh between the 15th and the date of his arrival there.

During the day we examined some of the nomads' huts. These are made of black cloth woven from the hair of the yāk. Each has a hole in the centre of the roof, for the escape of smoke from the fire, which is always lighted in the middle of the floor. Each is also provided with a sort of shrine opposite the entrance, before which in many tents a light is kept burning. As far as I could see there were no images on the shrines, only brass plates with apparently engravings or etchings, probably of the Buddha.

The dogs round the tents of the Champas seemed to be rather savage, for their owners seized them and held them down when we came near. The animals are about the size of a large retriever, with long black, shaggy hair.

The cold wind both at Gya and the first night at Debring, had found its way in through the lacing which united the walls of our tent to the inner fly, and it was evident that the tent would be much warmer if the two were stitched together. Accordingly I set Rupsang to work. He, like all Ladākis, had a sailmaker's needle always about him, and with the aid of one of the servants and some twine very quickly had the sewing done. This proved the greatest comfort to us on the expedition, as cold wind was about the worst thing we had to face.

On the 18th we were out about 6.30 A.M. and saw our things loaded up. The thermometer when we rose stood at 43°, the lowest to which it had fallen during the night. Two of the yāks proved very obstreperous.

In most cases, preparatory to loading, the forelegs of each beast were tied together, and when the load was on, the animal was released. Generally the yāks were quite docile, and when let loose walked quietly off to graze; but two of them, as soon as the rope round the forelegs was untied, proceeded to buck, plunging round in a circle in the most comic way, till the ropes gave and the

CHAMPA MILKWOMAN, AND GOATS TIED UP FOR MILKING.

loads were sent flying. Luckily, though three kiltas full of stores were thrown off one yāk's back, nothing was broken. Two quieter animals were then brought up and the loads put on. I found that thirteen yāks were more than enough for my loads, all except the two with the tents being very lightly laden. The difficulty consisted in affixing the loads to the animals' backs. If each yākdān had weighed two maunds (164 lbs.), any yāk would have carried two with ease. But as the average

weight of a yākdān was hardly thirty seers (60 lbs.), it would have been necessary, to make even a fair yāk load, to have put five on one beast's back, and this was of course a practical impossibility. Consequently few of the animals were loaded up to their carrying capacity. The loaded yāks were never tied or held when on the march, but always travelled free, driven by their owners from behind. As there are practically no trees in Rupshu, sticks are a rarity, and the Champas drove by throwing stones, whistling, and occasionally shouting at their animals.

To supply milk a flock of goats accompanied us from Debring. There were about sixteen animals, but we rarely got more than a quart a day. However, though deficient in quantity it was very excellent in quality, and we were well content. A woman was always in charge of the goats, and her method of arranging them for milking was ingenious and effective. A goat was caught, and a piece of long rope having been doubled, the loop was passed round its neck and the ropes crossed. The next goat was placed with its neck close to that of the first, but its face towards the other's tail, and the ropes taken one above and the other below the neck. The third goat was tied as the first had been, and the fourth like the second, and so on,—the first, third, fifth, seventh, etc. goats facing in one direction, and the second, fourth, sixth, etc. facing in the opposite, the ropes crossing between each pair. Thus when finished all the goats were standing unable to get away from each other, and the sterns of all were outwards. The milk-woman could then go round at her leisure, and extract what milk was

obtainable from each. The photograph which I took one day explains better than any description the method adopted.

Our destination that day was Sangtha on the Zārā stream not far from Kharnak, a place where a village had been built by the nomads to be occupied when necessary. We arrived about 5 P.M., and encamped on a beautiful piece of velvety grass by the edge of the water.

During the day we had covered about 15 miles, marching most of the time along a very wide valley of granite dust strewn with boulders. It was wearisome and monotonous to a degree, there being nothing to relieve the eye in the dreary waste around us, nothing except an occasional kyang or hare to divert the mind, depressed by the sullen aspect of that immense tract of hopeless desert. It was typical of a day's march in granite country in Ladāk, and was only better than many we had, in that the terrible wind was not as strong as it might have been, or the length of the journey as great.

CHAPTER XV

JULY 19-31—SANGTHA TO CHAMARTĀ CHU

Pogmore Lā nala—Kyang—*Ovis ammon*—Hares—*Ovis ammon* again—Good chance spoiled—Long wait—Without result—Ground to south-west examined—Nothing seen—Ladāk saddle—65° change of temperature—The five rams again—Wind wrong—Tibet wolf—The six rams—Long stalk—First *Ovis ammon*—Wounded ram—Mountain headaches—Second and third *Ovis ammon*—Fourth *Ovis ammon*—Hares—Kharnak—Dhād—Chamartā Chu—Tawny wolf—Burhel—Base of cartridge blown off.

I WAS called shortly after 5 A.M. on the morning of the 19th of July, when the thermometer stood at 42° inside the tent, and went down to 36° when I put it in the verandah, where I had my chota hāzri. The pony I intended to ride had bolted in the night, and men had gone to search for it, but another pony had been obtained—how I could not quite make out—from the nomad encampment of Kharnak about 10 miles off. I proposed taking a yāk for my tiffin basket, brief-bag, and camera, but found that one could not be induced to go alone, and two were being brought along. As this seemed an absurdity I got a coolie to carry some of the things, and gave the rest to the man with the pony. No riding saddle came with the pony, but a wooden pack-saddle was put on its

back, and a blanket on this, and with a couple of looped ropes for stirrups the gear was considered complete. As a matter of fact the animal proved of little use, as I could not ride it far uphill without the saddle sliding down towards the tail, nor at all downhill without sending the gear over its witherless shoulders on to its neck, and there was practically no level ground. The fixing up of the pony and changing from the yāk to a coolie wasted so much time that we did not start till 6.30 A.M.

We went up a nala, trending nearly due east, and kept along the high ground on the northern side. The country consisted of rolling hills covered for the most part with gravel and shingle, but in many places only the bare baked clay came to the surface. Here and there were patches of a dark green, scrubby, thorny bush, called by the Ladākis tramsa, which grows about a foot high, and is a most unpleasant thing to fall into. The flower is yellow, and obviously of the pea family. Mixed with the tramsa is a sage-green shrub called dapshang, greedily eaten by ponies, the roots affording inferior firewood.

In this comparatively rainless land, the plants which contrive to grow seem to have acquired the faculty of doing without water, and also of gathering nutriment from stones. The result is that the roots are always as dry as a bone, and afford, with the exception of the droppings of kyang and yāk, the only fuel obtainable in a country where trees are almost unknown.

The method of proceeding was this. The two shikāris, being infinitely quicker than I was at detecting game, walked slowly ahead some 10 to 50 yards apart, according to the nature of the ground, moving at a

reasonable pace going up and down the hillsides, but approaching each crest with caution. The Ladāk man, Rupsang, was specially careful, going slowly on tiptoe to the edge of each rise, pausing repeatedly while going up, and often standing for quite a minute at a time resting on one foot, with the toe only of the other touching the ground. The Kashmiri I had repeatedly to check, as his impatience was constantly taking him on too fast. About eleven o'clock we stopped for breakfast, having seen nothing but a few kyang[1] or wild asses, and some eight or ten hares. The former were a great nuisance, as repeatedly one or both shikāris would detect something on a distant hillside, and would at once sit down and bring their glasses to bear, getting up next moment with a disgusted expression of countenance, and muttering "kyang" in a tone of much contempt. After breakfast we rested for about an hour, and though there was no shade the wind kept us cool.

Then we went on, up the Pogmore Lā, which is at the head of the nala, and must be nearly 18,000 feet high, as it is well above the snow-line, and not much below the Rukchen Peak, some 6 miles to the north. Seeing nothing we turned back along the southern slopes of the nala, searching carefully as we went. The ground was so bare that I do not think anything could have escaped observation, especially as Abdulla's eyesight was exceptionally keen. When about half-way back we came across a herd of five kyang on the opposite side of a small ravine. They stood and looked at us from about 150 yards, so as I wanted a

[1] *Asinus kyang.*

skin, I sat down and fired at one with the Lee-Metford. The beast galloped about 20 yards, and then rolled over dead. His companions went off about 100 yards, so putting up the 200 yards' sight, I dropped another with a bullet through both shoulders. The first had been hit in the middle of the shoulder, and in both cases the bullet had gone out at the other side, making at exit a hole a little larger than at entrance. Both animals were quite dead when we got up to them. After skinning one, and arranging to send back next day for the skin of the other, we went on.

The kyang is a dark fawn in colour, with a black stripe down the back, white belly, legs, and muzzle. The tail is that of a donkey, and the whole appearance decidedly asinine. I do not understand how any one can class the animal as a wild horse.

Suddenly Rupsang whistled, and came to a stop, looking up at a distant hillside. Following the direction of his gaze, I noticed two grayish white spots apparently in motion. Bringing the telescope to bear, I found I was looking at the first *Ovis ammon* I had ever seen. The herd consisted of five animals, all rams, of whom two seemed to have fair horns. It was too late, of course, to do anything then, so we merely noted the place and went on to the tents, which we reached shortly before dark.

Altogether we counted that day eighteen hares and fourteen kyang. A few marmots and pigeons also showed themselves in the evening.

The 20th saw me up at 5 A.M., when I found the thermometer at 38° in our tent. I put it on the table beside me when having my chota hāzri in the little

verandah outside, and it went down to 32°. We were off before six, and went up the southern side of the nala first, the two shikāris as before being in front, and working the ground much as a pair of setters or pointers at home.

Nothing was seen till 8.45, when the Kashmiri made the first true point, dropping to his knees beside a large rock, and motioning his companion down. When we crawled up to him, we saw the previous day's herd about a mile off, feeding its way up the slope of a ridge almost parallel to ours. Noting the direction they were going, we waited till the sheep were over the crest of the ridge, and then set off, so as if possible to intercept them. At this point I warned the Kashmiri to be careful, and reminded him of the herd of markhor lost through his impatience about a month before. This man took reproof very badly, and though he attended to what I said at first, he was very soon forging ahead as if pace was the most important thing.

The Kashmiri was in front with the Ladāki close up. I was some ten paces behind and a little higher up the hill, and vainly endeavouring to restrain Abdulla, who said that the sheep were still far off. We had hardly gone a dozen paces after he said this, and were at the crest of a ridge, when the two men suddenly dropped, and looking over their heads, I saw the five rams gazing at them from a distance of about 50 yards, petrified with horror. I dared not fire over the men, so dropped to the ground, and endeavoured to work my way up to them. But it was too late, for the next instant the herd was going at racing speed down the hillside. I

jumped up and ran to a higher point, hoping to get a shot, but it was no use, as they were quite 300 yards away, and going all they knew before I could get my rifle to bear. The herd went right across the main nala, and over a sloping ridge beyond, where they were lost to view.

I then turned on the Kashmiri and gave it him hot. But for his persistent disobedience of orders, I should have had as good an opportunity of bagging one or two of the herd as I could have wished for.

The rams being out of sight we started after them, and had a long walk down the southern slopes of the nala, and up the northern till we reached the place where the sheep had disappeared. There being no signs of them anywhere we stopped for breakfast, and at half-past twelve started to track them.

The Kashmiri wanted to adopt the plan necessary in the case of markhor and ibex, of waiting till evening on the chance of seeing then the animals we were in pursuit of, but I knew that the *Ovis ammon* does not lie hid during the day, like the goats we had been after in Bāltistān, and knowing also that the track was a fresh one, I resolved to follow it. The herd had turned east, we found, and after an hour and a half's tracking, Rupsang detected it grazing quietly about half a mile from us, on the opposite side of a small nala near the Pogmore Lā. The sheep were so situated that we could not get near them where they were. They were two-thirds of the way up a hillside, which completely commanded the only hollow by which we could, without making a detour of many miles, get to the top of the hill above them. So we resolved to wait, in hopes that they would move on

to a more accessible spot. We accordingly lay down in cover and watched the herd till 5 P.M., when we had to give it up as hopeless.

During that interval of three hours the herd behaved in the most provoking manner. Twice it grazed its way almost to the top of the hill, and we expected it would go over the crest, but in each case it went back to where it had started from. Once it lay down, and we hoped all five would go to sleep, and enable us to crawl along the hollow that would have taken us to the back of where they lay. But the glasses showed that though lying down, each member of the herd was watching a different piece of ground with the most ceaseless vigilance, and any movement on our part into the open was sure to be detected. So having some distance to go back to our tents, we gave up the vigil at five o'clock, and went home much disgusted.

The sheep having had a regular fright, the Ladāki recommended that we should give them a rest, and examine the ground to the west of the tents next day. So, as the distance was said to be greater than to the Pogmore Lā, I arranged that a small 30-lb. tent and my bedding and food should follow me, to allow of my sleeping on the shooting ground if it should prove necessary. But as it turned out, the precaution was needless, for we saw no signs of *Ovis ammon* on the 21st, though we searched a considerable area to the west and south from soon after daybreak till past 1 P.M. The ground was good enough, and much better covered with vegetation than what we had been over on the two preceding days. Many kyang were seen, and signs of

burhel, but nothing of the game we wanted, so we returned to the main camp about 3.30 P.M.

A riding saddle had been procured for me from Kharnak, and I used it that day. It consisted of wooden panels with high wooden pommel and cantle. On one side it boasted an iron stirrup tied on with a piece of thick string; on the other side a loop of string was the only support for the foot.

That morning the thermometer had been 39° in the tent when I got up, and fell to 33° when I took it into the verandah outside. Yet when I was having my tub, about 4.30 P.M., in the small 30-lb. tent, it rose to 98°.

The 22nd saw us back in the Pogmore Lā nala; we went along the northern slopes, but kept low. I was astonished at the number of hares I saw. I counted twenty-eight before we got to the top of the Pass, and saw two more on the way home. There were also a few marmots. As usual the two shikāris worked like a pair of pointers in front, and stopped several times to examine things which turned out to be kyang.

Shortly after crossing the Pass we found fresh signs of the *Ovis ammon*, soft droppings and hoof marks on the ground. Rupsang, as his way was, when he found fresh tracks, or thought he was near game, at once took off his cap and talked only in a whisper. He sat down on the ground and began squeezing the droppings in his fingers to show how fresh they were, and then led the way on the track, going on tiptoe with his long hair streaming in the wind. Before starting I was made to load the rifle, that is, fill the magazine, as it was evidently

thought that the game was close, though we could see a very long way round, and there was nothing visible.

After following the track for a quarter of a mile, one of the pony-men pointed to a greenish patch more than a mile away, and the lot of us instantly sat down, as we could see a few specks moving about on it. The glasses showed these to be the five rams. They were grazing on a small patch of green stuff on a wide open hillside, and were apparently feeding upwards. Two masses of rock stood out from this hillside, and we thought that if we could get behind the nearer of these we could possibly get a shot if the rams fed up towards it. In any case this was the only chance, as there was not a particle of cover anywhere else. So we went back till we were out of sight on the other side of the Pass, and leaving the ponies in a grassy hollow commenced our stalk.

We were sheltered by the Pass to a certain extent, but the wind was behind us and there was great danger of the sheep scenting us. When we got to the rocks Abdulla and I took off our chaplis, and went on in our leather socks.

But all our precautions were in vain, for when we peered cautiously round and examined the green patch on which the game had been, there was nothing there! Evidently we had been winded by these keen-scented animals and they had fled. Much disappointed, we sat down to breakfast, the men making a fire of kyang and yāk droppings and the roots of dapshang.

After breakfast we followed the track of the sheep for a while, but as it led directly away from the camp,

and there was no knowing how far it might take us, we gave it up about half-past two, and started homewards by the southern slopes of the nala, thinking it possible we might see signs of other sheep on the way back. But in this we were disappointed, no game being sighted except the two hares mentioned above. I, of course, do not include kyang, of which we saw a number. We reached camp about 5.30 P.M.

A Champa Coolie of the Rupshu District (p. 277).

That evening I arranged to have the 30-lb. tent and some food sent up the nala to near the Pass, as it seemed likely we should have to go some distance beyond in search of our five rams. The necessity for the daily return to a distant camp involved giving up a stalk earlier than was advisable.

Accordingly, on the 23rd, leaving instructions for the tent, etc., to follow, we started as usual about a quarter to six and crossed the Pass about nine. On the way I was surprised to see the two shikāris suddenly sit down and whistle to me, while they began to take the rifle out of its cover. On going up to them I found them look-

ing at what they called a "shonku," or "jangli kutta." With the binoculars I made out a wolf-like animal about 300 yards away, slinking up the hillside. He seemed to have long hair, which appeared to be coloured gray and black in patches. But for the fear of starting better game I should have had a shot at him. He must have been a wolf,[1] notwithstanding the fact that both shikāris translated "shonku" as "jangli kutta," which is Hindustani for wild dog. He was probably the black variety.

After crossing the Pass we struck to the north in the direction taken by the rams the previous day, and searched a lot of ground till just twelve, but without result. So we sat down on the hillside and had breakfast. After this we went round the shoulder of the Rukchen Peak, marked in the map as 19,427 feet high, crossing the ridge back to the western side, about 300 or 400 feet below the summit just mentioned. This peak, which is cone-shaped, is composed of a mass of broken, sharp-edged, dark-coloured rocks, without a particle of vegetation.

I was going slowly along these rocks when, coming round a bend, I saw the two shikāris sitting behind a large rock, and gesticulating violently to me, evidently intimating that I was to conceal myself. I sat down accordingly, and when I saw the men creeping downwards, I proceeded to follow their example.

When we met in shelter below the cone, they said that six *Ovis ammon* rams were in the ravine not far in front, and that a stalk seemed possible; so we proceeded to crawl towards the hollow. Soon Abdulla

[1] *Canis laniger.*

and I had to take off our chaplis, and then we all three lay down on our backs and proceeded to worm our way onwards, feet foremost, by our heels and elbows. When we had gone as far as brought me in sight of a sheep sitting down on the opposite slope (I was leading and barely raised my head above the ground to see the animal), it was clear we could go no further. The herd was then so far away that I could hardly make out the horns, and of course all were quite out of range.

So I told Rupsang to make a detour of about 2 miles, and to come out on the hillside above the herd, on the off-chance that they would, on seeing him, cross the nala and come up the side where I was. The Ladāki, accordingly, crawled away, and the Kashmiri and I, lying flat on our backs, worked our way to a slightly better place. It was a hot method of travelling, as we had to cover quite a quarter of a mile, and most of the time a blazing sun was shining down on us.

It was about 2.30 P.M. when the herd was first sighted, and nearly an hour later when Rupsang started to make his detour. Some time after four we perceived him, a dark speck, on the ridge opposite, working his way on to get behind the herd. Meantime the sheep had grazed their way up the hillside a little, and were in full view of us as we lay on our sides. Had we moved we should certainly have been detected. About half-past four Rupsang began to roll stones down the hill, and after watching intently for a few minutes the herd started off, but, unfortunately, not to come up the hill to us. Instead, it ran quickly down the slope of the side it was on without crossing the hollow below, and disappeared round the hill.

There was nothing then for us to do but go to the tent which had been pitched not far away, and where we arrived about half-past five. As this herd consisted of six rams, it seemed probable that it was not the one we had stalked on the two previous occasions, but none of us saw it close enough to make sure.

The small camp was pitched near a spring not far from the Pass, where there was grass for the ponies and yāks. Curious to relate, there was a smart shower of rain after dinner, and the night was not as cold as I had found previous nights at Sangtha. When we arrived in camp Rupsang told us that he had seen where the herd had gone, and that we should probably find it close by in the morning.

Accordingly, next day (the 24th) we followed him up a small nala leading away from the camp, and after about half an hour's walking, sighted the six rams feeding on a hillside about a mile and a half off. To the right of where they were was a ridge, and below this a hollow running into a ravine, with a small watercourse which ran down between us and the sheep. If we could get to the edge of the hill overlooking this watercourse, and the sheep were to feed down into it, there might be a chance of a shot; but in the position in which the game then was, obviously our best course was to get into the hollow to their right, and see if a shot could be obtained by crawling up the ridge.

So we moved to our right, keeping below the crest of the ridge overlooking the watercourse, so as to be out of sight of the game; and when we found a convenient depression in the ridge we lay down and crawled across, taking advantage of every block of stone we could find.

When we came to the first spot from which the rams should have been visible, if they had remained where they originally were, none were to be seen. We scanned the hillside all about carefully, but never saw them. The Kashmiri, however, noticed a wolf, and it was very probable this beast had scared the sheep. We accordingly crept on, looking about carefully, when suddenly Abdulla threw himself flat behind a stone, and we quickly followed his example.

Looking up in the direction in which he pointed, I saw the herd in the very spot which we had been trying to gain. They were evidently disturbed about something, and kept staring down the ravine at the top of which they stood. Here the Kashmiri said he saw the wolf going up towards the sheep. The latter soon moved off in the direction from which they had come, going fast, and sending the stones clattering down. Only that their attention was so taken up with the wolf, they must have seen us while we were getting to the position in which we lay; so it was lucky for us the pursuer was there. Every now and then the rams would stop and look back and then go on again. But the wolf seemed after a short time to miss them or give them up, for he went on beyond where they had been, and finally disappeared round the hillside. Then the herd, seemingly satisfied that there was no further danger, quietly lay down.

They were in full view on one side of the ravine, while we lay as still as we could manage on the other. We could not move, as any attempt to change our position would inevitably have meant our being dis-

covered. We had not been able to choose the spot we were on, and were consequently lying partly on snow which had fallen the previous night, and as this melted with the heat of our bodies and the warm sun, our circumstances were not quite as happy as they might have been. I got the telescope into position, and for a long time watched the herd. There were two which seemed to have fair heads, but not having shot *Ovis ammon* before, I was not able to judge of the length of the horns. We must have got to where we were about seven o'clock, and it was not till close on nine that the herd thought fit to move. First one got up and yawned, and then walked up to another, evidently with a view to butt him, whereupon the second got up and presented his horns. The first up then went on to another and roused him, and then two of those up began to playfully butt at each other. This woke up the other three, whereupon all began to look about them, as if deliberating what to do next.

It was time now, I thought, to rouse the shikāris, who had wisely taken the opportunity of our long enforced inaction to go to sleep; so having stirred them up, I watched the herd with much interest. Apparently the rams considered the grass of the ravine below worth going to, for they presently began to graze their way down. As soon as they were out of sight in the hollow, we started for the edge of the hill overlooking the ravine, going on hands and knees chiefly. We succeeded in getting into a depression not far from the edge, and looked for the herd. It could not be seen, and we crept cautiously forward. Suddenly we caught sight of the rams grazing at the bottom of the ravine. I flung myself on my back

and began sliding down towards them, keeping out of view by making for a friendly rock. As soon as my feet touched the rock, I sat up and found myself face to face with a ram who was watching me curiously from about 100 yards. He was directly facing me, and just beyond were two others broadside on. The other three were not visible, being behind a rise in the ground. Having been detected, I could not wait for the three I did not see, so aimed at the best visible, one of the broadside sheep, and dropped him with a bullet through the spot where neck and shoulder join. The rest of the herd went off at once, and I fired a couple of shots at the last one. Meeting the ponies and men lower down, they turned back up a hill to my right, and I had a shot or two with the 500 yards' sight up, and then ran across the hollow to the opposite side of the ravine to try and intercept them. I saw them again at about 400 yards, and lying down had two more shots at the nearest ram. Then looking through the telescope I saw that one had blood down his left side coming from the shoulder. Evidently he had been touched by a splinter of a bullet, and had a wound only skin deep, for if a bullet, or part of one even, had penetrated that spot, he must have dropped, and he was going up the hill with perfect ease and comfort to himself when I saw him. We watched the herd of five go up to the peak above us and then disappear, after which we went back to the ravine to cut up the dead ram, and have breakfast. The horns were only $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $25\frac{1}{2}$ inches respectively, with a base girth of 15 inches. I should not have fired had I known they were so small.

It was just 11.30 A.M. when I started, accompanied by

the two shikāris and a man with a pony, to track the wounded ram. The grass of the ravine soon ceased, and we found ourselves on boulders of granite, and had a hard climb up to the peak above us, which must have been about 18,500 feet, as it looked but little lower than Rukchen, which was not far off. Between the boulders there were patches of ground made up of disintegrated granite, which got in between my chaplis and leather socks, and did not add to the pleasure of walking. The pony could not, after a short time, get up at all, so the coolie in charge tied him to a rock and came on.

Owing to the altitude, the Kashmiri and I soon had bad mountain headaches, and by the time we reached the summit were more disposed to lie down than to stalk *Ovis ammon*. The blood tracks ceased at the top, but just as we got there we caught sight of a ram disappearing over a ridge beyond, and we knew then the direction the herd had taken.

Examining the hillside below us, we saw three rams grazing about a mile and a half off, in a position where stalking was out of the question. Looking at them through the telescope, I perceived that they were better than any I had yet seen, but as they were surrounded on all sides by at least a mile of open ground without a particle of cover, it was quite hopeless attempting to get near them. I noticed, however, after watching for half an hour or so, that the three were slowly feeding their way up towards us, and it struck me that it might possibly be their intention to cross the ridge we were on, at a point about a quarter of a mile to our right, where there was

a dip. Accordingly, we started to get behind some rocks near this dip, from which I could get an easy shot if the sheep did really come up.

When we were about half-way there, however, the foremost ram appeared, very much to my surprise and disgust, as, if I had started a few minutes earlier, he would have had to pass within 50 yards of where I should have been, and I ought not to have missed him. As matters stood, however, I had no alternative but to try a shot from where I was, so sitting down I drew a bead, with the 200 yards' sight up, on the unconscious ram. As I had exhausted all the ready-filed bullets[1] I could not use the magazine, and had to load from my pocket. Just as I was going to fire, another ram appeared, and I decided to wait till the three, who were evidently all coming up, were before me. The third showed himself a moment later, and as the leader had by that time gone some distance up the hill, I fired at the second. I had taken a full sight, and the bullet flew harmlessly over his back. Seeing the splash beyond them, perceiving no smoke, and not being able probably to accurately locate the direction of the sound, owing to the reverberation amongst the mountains, the rams were evidently much puzzled to know where the danger exactly was, and the two last up instinctively ran back towards me and away from where the bullet had hit. Taking a finer sight I fired again, and did not see any splash from the bullet. The rams seemed to have no longer any doubt as to the direction in

[1] The bullets in all my cartridges had truncated ends, consequently, until they were filed round, the cartridges could not be fed into the chamber from the magazine, as explained in the remarks on the battery recommended for Kashmir (p. 445).

which danger lay, for the three started up the hill at racing speed. I fired again twice before they were out of sight over the next peak, and then held my head between my hands for a few minutes, as the firing made the pain very severe. Going to where the animals had been, we found blood and followed it to the top of the peak, and on arriving there two of the rams were seen coming back

OVIS AMMON (Shot on 24th July).
Length on curve, 34¾″. Circumference, 16½″. Tip to tip, 27″.

round a shoulder of the hill, and going in the direction from which they had originally come.

They were about 150 yards or a little more away, as I lay down on the edge of the hill and aimed at the one further off. I fired twice at him and he rolled over dead, and afterwards three times at the second, which fell mortally wounded. Then we hurried down and found

that the one which was dead had received a single bullet, which had gone through from back to chest. The other had got three, one through his left hind leg, and two through back and stomach. As, from its position, the wound in the leg could not have been caused by any of the last three shots, I concluded that this was the beast whose blood we had followed. The horns were not as good as I had expected them to be; one was $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by 16 inches in girth, the other $34\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

When the horns had been measured, the heads were cut off and the carcases buried under rocks, till men could be sent for the meat. It was about half-past two when the cutting up was begun, and in an hour afterwards we started for the camp. The pony-man carried the two heads and some meat, which made a heavy load, and the trudge back was very laborious for all. The Kashmiri and I had splitting headaches, and coming down the granite blocks shook us woefully. We reached the tent by the spring about 6 P.M., when all I could do was to have a little soup and lie down.

Next morning opened with a smart shower of rain, and rolling clouds along the hillsides rendered it impossible to see any distance; so we made for the main camp at Sangtha, rain falling most of the way there. There were many reasons for going to Sangtha. I knew that the wounded ram was so slightly hit that he was not likely to lag behind the rest anywhere, and the clouds and rolling mist made it nearly impossible to see any distance, and consequently materially increased the difficulty of finding him. The men all wanted a rest, as I did

myself, and there were three heads to be skinned and cleaned. So we had a quiet day at Sangtha, and I saw to the heads and mended my chaplis.

The following day (the 26th) we went in a south-easterly direction, having arranged for the 30-lb. tent and some necessaries to follow us in case we should be delayed. At nine o'clock we sighted a solitary ram moving ahead of us. Judging from his appearance, and from his being alone, he was probably the one left unshot of the three we had seen together on the 24th. We followed him up for some time, but finally lost him round the shoulder of a hill, where we had hoped to intercept him.

While searching the hillsides from this spot, we saw a couple of rams grazing in a nala about two miles off. As there seemed no chance of their moving away—they were grazing indiscriminately about—we resolved to have breakfast, and go after them later. Accordingly, a fire of dapshang roots and kyang droppings was lighted in a hollow, and my mutton fried and kettle boiled as usual.

Then about 10 A.M. we started for the ravine in which the rams had been seen. We soon came in sight of them again. Neither was a good head, but the larger of the two seemed to me to have 30-inch horns at the least, and I resolved to try for a shot. While I was examining his horns through the telescope, a shower of rain came on, and rendered it difficult to make a decently accurate estimate. It was still raining as we approached the side of the nala, but a few minutes after the rain had cleared off. Looking about from the top of

the western ridge above it, the rams could nowhere be seen, and it seemed probable that they were lying down at our side of the nala, and were therefore invisible. So we raced down to a hollow we saw below us, and here the two shikāris stayed, while I crept forward.

In a minute I sighted the two rams lying down about 100 yards off, and, as good luck would have it, with their faces turned towards the opposite hillside and their tails towards me. By the aid of a friendly bush of dapshang, I was able to get some 10 yards nearer by lying on my back and wriggling along feet foremost. Then turning round I lay down at full length, resting on my elbows and chest, and took a deliberate shot at the broad back of the larger ram. As usual, I forgot to allow for the fact that at 100 yards it is necessary with my .303, not only to take the smallest possible amount of bead, but also to aim well below the mark. The result was that the bullet flew harmlessly over his head. Both jumped up and bolted down the glen, and sitting up I fired three or four shots at the better of the two before he had travelled 200 yards. At the last shot he dropped in his tracks, and going up to him I found he had received two bullets through the body, both of which had gone out at the far side. On cutting him up, his interior was found to have been badly damaged, one kidney and a part of the liver being totally destroyed. The horns measured only $28\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches in girth, so he was not as good a specimen as I had thought. After cutting him up and leaving the meat under rocks till it could be sent for, the two shikāris and I went on to see if we could come across any more, while the pony-man went back with

the head to the spot at which the 30-lb. tent was to meet us.

But when after searching till past 3 P.M. we saw no more, and came across no fresh sign, we resolved to return to Sangtha, and start next day for a nala beyond Kharnak, of which Rupsang had told us. We reached the site of the proposed small camp, just as the yāks with the tent and bedding, etc., arrived there, so, bidding them follow us back, we went on to Sangtha. Exchanging the rifle for the gun, I picked up a brace of hares on the way home. These animals are very like the blue mountain hare of Scotland, being much larger than the plains' hare of India, and slate blue on the hinder part of the body, with a white tail.

On the 27th we shifted camp, marching up the stream that flows from the north-west to join the river near Sangtha, and crossing the watershed by the Yar Lā (16,180 feet) into the valley, at the head of which the Kharnak nomads' camp is situated. Here we stopped for the night, some 3 miles below the village, after a march of some 13 miles. We should have gone further, but that the stream which comes down from the Champas' camp disappears a little below this point into the ground, and no water is again obtainable for many miles.[1]

At about 10 P.M. that night the water, however, began to flow; and the cook, who had, to escape the wind, established himself in the stony bed of the stream, under the shelter of the bank, had to beat a very hasty retreat. Next morning there was a clear stream about 4 feet wide flowing past our tents. Apparently most of the

[1] Cp. remarks on p. 326.

water came from the snows at the head of the valley, very distant from where we camped, and its quantity depended on the melting caused by the hot sun.

On the morning of the 28th the post coolie from Leh arrived. He had been sent in on the evening of the 17th from Debring, and had fallen ill (he said) at Shushot, a few miles on this side of Leh, and been delayed in consequence. The man had taken in money to pay for parcels, etc., and had brought everything out perfectly safe. He had carried registered letters, containing notes worth over Rs.1000, as well as books and parcels, yet went away perfectly content and well pleased with a payment of Rs.2.8 for the double journey.

Besides the necessity of checking and reading the contents of the post-bag, we had to settle up accounts with the headman of Kharnak for the eight days (20th-27th) during which he had supplied things to us at Sangtha. We had kept thirteen yāks while there, at four annas a day each, and sixteen goats, at two annas a day for the lot, had been sent to supply us with milk. We had also bought three sheep, for which we paid R.1 each. The mutton, though very small and lean, was nevertheless fairly tender and well flavoured. One we had had ourselves, one was bestowed on the servants, and one we took on with us.

As a natural result of these various transactions it was past 9 A.M. when we were under weigh. My wife had a bad headache, which she could not account for in any way, unless it was due to the height. We must have been about 15,000 feet above the sea. The river soon ceased to accompany us, and it was past noon before we

came on water again. When we did, however, it was curiously abundant, and exceedingly clear and cold. Having walked over a stony river-bed for some time after the Kharnak water had ceased, we turned a corner and came on something like half a dozen springs, bubbling up amongst the stones. Here we sat down under a tall rock and had breakfast, a fine view of exquisitely tinted

TWO CHAMPAS RUPSANG CHAMPA RAMZANA HADE HOSEIN

SERVANTS COOKING BREAKFAST AT DHĀD.

crags being before us at our meal. This place, we were informed, is locally known as Dhād.

About 2 miles lower down we came on a lonely Lāmasery, and a little further, on a Buddhist shrine decked with burhel horns, coloured rags, and poles ornamented with yāks' tails. The valley narrowed considerably a little above this spot, the river, which had

been augmented from several springs as it progressed, flowing between very steep, picturesque, and wonderfully coloured rocks.

About a mile below the shrine we turned up a gorge to our right, the opening being very narrow between high perpendicular cliffs. This was the entrance to the Chamartā Chu nala, of which Rupsang had spoken. For some 3 or 4 miles up the hills on either hand consisted of jagged crags, practically impossible for man or beast, but at the end of this distance the mountains opened out, and disclosed a charming and fairly level plain of grass, where we encamped by the side of a snow-fed stream, about 16 miles from Kharnak. The hills beyond this plain on either hand were more of the rolling upland type, and were such as *Ovis ammon* might certainly frequent. So we went to bed hoping great things for the morrow.

Our expectations were, however, doomed to disappointment. We went up a branch nala leading north-east on the 29th, and though we covered a lot of likely ground, saw nothing except what the shikāris called a "shonku." This animal looked about the size of a mastiff, and was tawny in colour, and with heavy action and large limbs. His tail was short and looked black, and I think he must have been a wolf of the yellow variety, quite different from the animal seen on the 23rd. We were home by 4 P.M. after a hot and unsatisfactory day.

The 30th also proved a blank, except that we saw a herd of burhel (nāpu) at the very end of the nala. They were in an impossible situation, and the wind was

unfavourable, so we gave them up for the day and came home. In the evening I took a photograph of the Chamartā Chu valley, as seen from the front of our tents.

Next morning we started after the burhel, and about 8 A.M. arrived at the end of the nala, where we had seen them the previous afternoon. There was a patch of grass up one side of this, and above, nothing but broken slate lying as it had slipped down, right up to the top of the ridge. The opposite side had no grass, as it consisted of nothing but broken slate. We had been going over a lot of this kind of ground the day before, and found it very severe work. Judging from what I saw then and since, slate rocks and shale are apparently what burhel prefer to live on, just as *Ovis ammon* are partial to rolling uplands of granite sand and gravel.

For nearly two hours we searched the hillsides, but saw no signs of burhel. So we came down to the grass of the valley and had breakfast.

About noon we started up one of the side glens, and after about an hour—when we were some 500 or 600 feet below its top—we saw the herd on the sky-line going quietly. We crouched behind rocks at once, and watched the animals till they had passed out of sight. Then leaving the ponies below, we three started after the herd. We had counted eleven sheep, of whom two seemed to have fairly good heads. The climb was very steep and hard, being over broken slate rocks, which were continually giving way under our feet. When we reached the top, we found that the burhel had not gone very far, and were about 60 or 70 yards beyond a small rise in the hillside. We could see one of them looking back, but

he apparently could not make out what we were. As soon as he had moved on, we made for the small rise. As I got to the top, I saw two fair burhel about 70 yards off. I sat down, and was drawing a bead on the larger one, when both disappeared, evidently into a hollow beyond. I ran forward, and catching sight of the whole herd making tracks up the hillside, sat down hastily, and fired at the best ram. I was so pumped that I missed clean. Going through the action of reloading, I again pressed the trigger. The hammer fell, but there was no explosion. Opening the breech and looking down, I found that the magazine had slipped from its catch, and that the cartridges would not come up in front of the bolt. As in my hurry I could not get the magazine back into its place, I took out a couple of cartridges and snapped the case back. But the cartridges still would not come up, so I tried to slip a spare one into the breech. But it would not go. For the moment I could not think what had happened. Then I saw a small round object in the breech, and perceived that the base of the exploded cartridge had apparently been blown off when the shot was fired, and that the shell of that cartridge was still in the breech. It was evident that the rifle was for the time useless, and though I poked at the piece in the breech and endeavoured to get it out, it would not move till the animals were out of sight, and then it fell out of its own accord. Thus was a first-rate chance of a shot lost. I ought at the distance I was, and considering the slowness with which the sheep had to move over that awful ground, to have bagged the two good ones. But for my being so pumped I ought to have got one with

my first shot. Altogether it was a most unlucky business, the only consolation being that it was not the rifle which had gone wrong.

I went on for about a mile after the herd, on the off-chance of its stopping in some hollow, and giving me even a long shot, but it was no use. When I next saw the animals they were over 600 yards away, climbing the highest rocks of the ridge, and the moment after they had dropped over the crest on to the Gya side. It was of course useless to follow them any further, so we turned towards camp, thoroughly disheartened by our hard luck.

LOOKING UP THE CHAMARTĀ CHU VALLEY (p. 270).

CHAPTER XVI

AUGUST 1-18—CHAMARTĀ CHU TO POBRANG

March back to Kharnak—Zārā—Difficulty about pony—Pongo Nāgu—Pachātak—Shewl—Misunderstanding with the yāk-men—Difficult travelling—Some things lost—Trying ponies with the umbrella—Champas at early meal—Sildat Lā—Puga valley—Nimu—Crossing the ford—Nowi—Yākgiang—Donglung—Burhel ground—Dāchung—Shushal—Transport difficulties—Takkung—Karkpet—Pangong lake—Mun—Spangmik.

It was evident by this time that there were no *Ovis ammon* in this nala, so I resolved to leave it and make for the ground south of Shushal, of which I had heard a good deal, and then go on to Changchenmo. On the way I hoped to pick up a Tibet gazelle (goa) near Pachātak.

Accordingly, sending Mahamdu to Leh for some stores we required, as well as letters and papers, and directing him to wait for us at the northern end of the Pangong lake, we marched on the 1st of August back to Kharnak, 16 miles, camping higher up the stream than last time, and just at the foot of the Yar Lā. Unfortunately my wife got a bad headache here again, and during the night felt such a difficulty in breathing while lying down that she had to get into a chair about 2 A.M. and sit there till dawn.

The Yar Lā was crossed next morning, and we finished the march of 16 miles to the Zārā camping ground about 5 P.M. Here our tents were pitched on a grassy island in the Zārā stream. There is no village anywhere near Zārā, but we had sent word to Debring the day before from Kharnak, and fresh yāks, goats, and one pony were brought by the headman of that encampment, and the Kharnak animals sent back.

There was a difficulty next morning (the 3rd) with the Kharnak men. As we required two ponies, and only one had been brought from Debring, I wanted to take on one of the Kharnak ponies to Pachātak. But the owners would not agree, and even Rupsang was unable to persuade them. So I refused to pay them for the animals we had used, and said that if I could not get the pony and were obliged to walk, a man would have to come with me to the next camp for payment. Strange as it may seem, they preferred this alternative, and two men accordingly came along with us to Pachātak.

The march to Pachātak was a tedious journey of some 17 miles. We stopped for breakfast about noon at Pongo Nāgu, where there is a good spring and nice grass. The place is about 2 miles north of the Tsokr Chumo salt lake. It was the latter part of that day's journey that was so tedious, and the cause probably was that Pachātak was visible from where we had our breakfast, and looked about 4 miles distant, but proved to be actually about 10. The clear air of Ladāk causes places to look quite close that are really a long way off, and it is particularly exasperating to see a place apparently not more than 5 miles or so away, and then to find when the

5 miles have been traversed, that it still appears as distant as ever. There are a few small springs at Pachātak rising in a little valley, and hence the place has come to be known as a camping ground. There is no village or nomads' encampment anywhere near.

A LHASSA COOLIE.

On the 4th the Kashmiri shikāri was ill and unable to come out, so I went out with Rupsang. We were accompanied by two coolies, one a man fresh from Lhassa, the other a Champa from Debring.[1] We covered a lot of ground, but only saw two gazelles (goa), which was the game I had come here specially to get. One was a female, within range of which I got. The other was a buck, who bolted before I had a chance of a shot. I was surprised at the number of *Ovis ammon* ewes, young ones and small rams, which I saw. In one herd I counted 16, in another 9, and in a third no less than 28 animals. The ground consisted of rolling uplands, the Tibet gazelle

[1] See illustration on p. 253.

apparently preferring this sort of country to the ravines amongst which his brother of the plains of India is generally found.

That evening one of the Champa yāk drivers was understood to say, that by going down the Shewl nala we could cross the Indus at a point much nearer Shushal, than if we went by the ordinary route *via* Nimu. So it was arranged that we should send the tents into the Shewl nala the next day, while we hunted the gazelle ground once more.

Accordingly on the morning of the 5th my wife and I, accompanied by Abdulla, Rupsang, and some coolies, went on to the goa ground, the two shikāris keeping a long way in front. But we had no luck, seeing nothing whatever, though we searched very carefully till well on in the afternoon. Toto, my wife's dog, however, distinguished himself, for he succeeded in getting between a marmot and its burrow, and captured that exasperating little rodent. About 3 P.M. we gave up, and went down into the Shewl nala.

I had directed the tents to be placed at the first water found in the nala, but instead, probably owing to the anxiety of the yāk men to get near a village for the night, we found them at the village of Shewl itself, 14 miles from Pachātak. If the camp had been pitched where I directed, I should have had another day at the goa, for I should have been near the top of the ravine, but from where I found it, the delay in returning to the goa ground would have been too great. So I resolved to give up the gazelles for the time.

Further, I learned when I reached Shewl that it was

impossible to cross the Indus where that gorge opened on it. The yākman who had brought us down the Shewl valley now maintained that he had never said we could cross where it joined the Indus, and as our only interpreter was Rupsang, whose knowledge of Hindustani was very limited, it is very likely some mistake had been made.

On further inquiry in the village, we found that we could make our way into the Puga valley, which was the way to the Nimu ford, without having to go back, and it appeared probable that the Debring men had brought us here, thinking that their yāks would be changed at Shewl, whereas if we had gone down the ordinary route through the Puga valley, their animals would have had to accompany us as far as Nimu. This was Abdulla's explanation, and it may have been correct.

On the morning of the 6th we started with a guide (who happened to be a Gurkha sepoy called Kāshi Rām, in the Maharajah's service, employed in looking after the working of some sulphur mines he said), and moved parallel to the Indus and across the line of ridges running down to its valley. The result was that we had a good deal of up and down, and the journey was more laborious than the distance traversed, about 14 miles, would imply. We crossed two main valleys, keeping as far as possible along the tops, and went over no less than twenty-four streams, mostly small. We arrived, about 4 P.M., at a nomads' encampment in a valley not named on the map, running down to the Indus opposite Chumathang, and resolved to halt here for the night.

When the yāks came up, we found that one had had a fall when going up a bank after crossing one of the

streams, and had burst the ropes tying on his load. A kilta was broken and some stores, including tea and sugar, lost, as well as an electro-plate flask and three tumblers, which unluckily were with them.

As my wife generally carried a white umbrella when riding, it was usual, on a new pony being brought up for her, for one of the men to mount it, and try whether it would shy at the umbrella or not. On the morning of the 7th, Rupsang tried the new pony, and it was most amusing watching him, with his burly figure in its huge bundle of leather clothes, on the little rat of a pony, trotting up and down, as he waved a white umbrella all round the animal's head. This precaution had been adopted, because on one occasion, in a nasty place on the Leh road, a pony bolted with my wife, frightened by that umbrella.

While the tent was being struck, I took the opportunity to photograph the Champa yāk men at their morning meal of sattoo[1] and water. They sat in a circle round a large bowl of the stuff, which the lady who looked after our goats ladled out into the wooden, saucer-like cup every Ladāki habitually carries.

That day we crossed the pass entered in the map as the Sildat Lā, and went down the valley marked as Shingda. Neither name is locally known, and I was puzzled at first to find out where exactly we were. We struck the Puga stream where the Chuldi river flows into it from the south, and then marched down the Puga valley, very nearly to the point where its river joins the Indus. About a mile above the junction we found a stretch of grass and a quantity of tamarisk bushes,

[1] Barley-meal, of which thick chupatties are also made.

GROUP OF CHAMPAS AT THEIR MORNING MEAL.

which last were quite refreshing to see, after the treeless country through which we had been recently travelling. We arrived about four o'clock, and the yāks an hour after, when the tents were put up and things made comfortable. We had done about 13 miles.

It was quite warm that night, and I only required two blankets. The night before, and generally since leaving Upshi, I had slept in my sheepskin bag, sometimes without, but generally with blankets as well.

On the 8th the march was along the Indus. About eleven o'clock we found a high cliff of conglomerate which gave some shade, and accordingly sat down to our breakfast. There being no wood, fuel was obtained from the yāk droppings on a patch of grass by the river. The Indus, though the colour of pea soup from silt, had to supply water for the tea.

About 2 P.M. we arrived opposite Nimu, at which point the river is fordable. Here we found the stream flowing gently in a series of channels among a number of flat grassy islands. Some men belonging to the Nimu village, who were on the left bank when we arrived, sent word to Nimu for coolies to take the baggage, and for a raft (called a zāk, and made of inflated goat-skins) to take us over. But the river being more than half a mile wide at the point, and the village being about 2 miles up the far bank, it soon became evident that we could not get across that evening. We accordingly pitched our tents by the edge of the stream when the yāks came in, and an uncommonly damp dirty camp we found it. The day's march was about 12 miles.

We were wakened on the morning of the 9th by the

noise inseparable from the beginning of the operation of sending our things across. The kiltas of stores, the servants' tents, etc., were despatched by Abdulla, on the backs of our yāk drivers, before we were up. The men seemed rather to enjoy the fun, for they went over

A ZĀK ON THE INDUS.

laughing and singing, and appeared to consider the whole affair a joke.

After we got up the process of transfer continued, everything being deposited on an island about half-way across. Meanwhile the fitting together of the zāk on the opposite side of the river was going on, and about nine o'clock, when it was completed, the removal from the island to the right bank of the river, of the baggage accumulated on the former, began. This went on till eleven, the things being partly taken over on men's

backs, and partly on the zāk. The water was above the middles of the men.

At eleven o'clock I called out to have the zāk brought over to our side, and after I had photographed it, my wife and I were taken across. On examination, the zāk was found to consist of eight or ten inflated goat-skins (with the hair left on), on which a few sticks were tied to form a sort of platform. Our united weight, together with that of some numdah pack-saddles given us to sit on, brought the platform almost down to the edge of the water. Two men walked through the water, pulling the zāk after them, and singing a monotonous sort of chant all the time. This indeed proved to be the custom with all crossing the ford, for not only did the men pulling the zāk sing, but also the men who carried our things over on their backs, and even ordinary travellers, whom we met fording the river when we were being taken across. On reaching the other bank, we had our breakfast sitting on a grassy mound by the water, while the rest of our luggage was brought over. The heat was quite exceptional. There was a bright sun and little wind, and no shelter was anywhere to be had.

In the meantime the shikāris had got hold of the Nimu headman, and made him collect the yāks we required, and bring them down to the water's edge, where they were quickly loaded.

We started about one o'clock, and after a hot and tiring march up the Indus of nine miles over glaring sand, arrived at a place called Nowi, where we found excellent grass and a clear spring. The place is used as a grazing

headquarters by the nomads, but was not occupied by any one when we got there.

On the 10th we had a short march of about 12 miles to a grassy camping ground with a spring, called Yākgiang, at the mouth of a nala I wanted to try for *Ovis ammon*. This place is a few miles north of the point where the Indus makes a half turn to the west, shortly after entering Ladāk from Tibet. A shallow stream coming down from the Saka Lā joins it at the bend. The camping ground was a pleasant spot, covered with short grass on a sandy soil, and with patches of big tramsa bushes here and there, in the shelter of which the men made their fires.

On the 11th I went up the nala, and had a bad day, seeing nothing. The only *Ovis ammon* ground (*i.e.* rolling uplands of granite sand and gravel) was next the Saka Lā valley, and there was very little of it. Beyond I found steep slopes formed of broken slate, burhel ground in fact, such as I had seen at the head of the Chamartā Chu nala, with plenty of burhel "sign" about. So I spent most of the day looking for burhel on these trying hillsides, breakfasting at a spot so steep that it was only with difficulty we could sit down, and came home in the evening all of us pretty well tired out. I had had a pony with me, but hardly got on its back, the ground in most places was so bad.

The next day I sent my wife with the camp up the valley, about six miles towards the Saka Lā, to a camping ground called Donglung, while I went over the hills to the east. This also proved a day of useless work, for the *Ovis ammon* tract was a very narrow belt, with

nothing on it but kyang, and beyond there were steep hills of granite blocks and granite sand with burhel marks. These tempted me once again, and we spent another day toiling over the broken ground. We saw a herd of seven burhel, but all were small.

That day I was from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. climbing over granite blocks, interspersed with patches of granite sand and gravel, lying at a very steep angle. The foot sank almost up to the ankle in the latter, and at each step upwards one went some 8 or 10 inches down the hill. I had on chaplis, and the gravel got in between my leather socks and the chaplis, and rendered walking sometimes very painful. Apparently burhel are only found either on this ground or the broken slate mentioned already, and it is hard to say which is the worse to walk over.

On the 13th I sent the camp on 8 miles across the Saka Lā (a very low pass) to a small lake not marked on the map, situated at a place called Dāchung, going myself in the same direction, but over the mountains to the east. I found a good deal more of the rolling uplands which *Ovis ammon* frequent, and came in sight of a herd of six, but the animals were too far off for me to tell the size of the horns, or even how many were rams. The footprints, however, showed at least one large beast. We watched them disappear up a gorge close to the Pangoor lake, and as it was then too late to do anything made for the camp.

Next day (the 14th) I took the 30-lb. tent and my bedding and some food, resolved to sleep on the hillside if we should be kept out late by the herd. We worked over the hills conscientiously all day, but never saw a

sign of the sheep we were after. By evening we found ourselves some miles north of the camp, and I sent back a Champa with a letter to my wife, asking her to march to Shushal next day, as I was already part of the way in that direction, and proposed going there myself on the 15th.

Having sent off this message we camped on the hill, and the following morning, after a very windy night, hunted over the remainder of the block of hills we had been searching, but without success. We then descended to the plain, and marched across it to Shushal, arriving about 2 P.M. My wife had got in half an hour or so before.

Shushal is a permanent village, about 14 miles from Dāchung, boasting a few stone huts, and a small grove of trees, grown with careful irrigation in a most unpromising soil. There were also a few fields of barley, which gave a prosperous appearance to the place.

Curiously enough, mosquitoes were very numerous at Shushal. They were a large variety, but not venomous, and particularly easily killed. They swarmed into the tent as soon as it was pitched, and settled in the dark corners, so we sat chiefly outside in the wind. At night they seemed to go away or become quiescent, for they gave no trouble.

The whole of the Saka Lā valley on both sides of the Pass, but especially the northern half, is alive with hares of the kind so common at Sangtha. Toto ran himself to a standstill, time after time, chasing these creatures, and finally gave up pursuing them, they were so numerous, and escaped him with such unvarying regu-

larity. On the 13th, when crossing the valley in the neighbourhood of the small lake, I must have turned up some twenty in about half an hour. I do not think I have ever seen hares so numerous anywhere as in that Saka Lā valley.

Shushal was the place at which the Nimu men, who had been with us since we crossed the Indus on the 9th, expected to have their yāks and ponies changed. But on inquiry from the Kotwal, as the headman here is called, we were informed that there were not enough yāks in the village to allow of a change, owing to the number out with various sportsmen who had passed through. Also there were very few men left. He offered to give the Nimu men a present, in addition to full pay for their yāks, if they would go on with us, but this liberality did not seem to produce any effect, for the Nimu men stoutly refused to go any further. Matters were left in this unpleasant way for the night, and, from my experience of the Kharnak men at Zārā, I anticipated trouble.

These Champa nomads appear to be accustomed to convey travellers a certain distance for certain stipulated pay, but no increase of pay or offer of rewards seems to have any effect in inducing them to go further. This was well exemplified next morning.

When I awoke shortly after dawn on the 16th, I heard an angry altercation going on, and when I went out of the tent to see what was the matter, I found that the Nimu men had actually begun to drive off their yāks, although they had not been paid the hire (over Rs. 30) due to them for the distance they had come. The

Shushal Kotwal was protesting vigorously, and endeavouring to detain them. When I went out I ordered the yāks to be stopped at once, and said they should not go till I got substitutes. The yāks were accordingly brought back, and the Nimu men then said they would let the animals be taken, provided Shushal men went to drive and load them, they—the Nimu men—going back to their village. The Kotwal vowed he had not enough men in the village, and the altercation was renewed.

Finally, I got the yāks loaded up by the Nimu men, and with four of them and a few men from Shushal, began my day's march about 8 A.M. With difficulty one of the two ponies from Nimu was changed, but the other which I brought on proved so footsore as to be practically useless. We reached the Takkung camping ground, close to the Pangong Lake, about eleven, and had breakfast there under some small tamarisk-trees, and by a pretty fast-flowing clear river. Then we marched on by the lake to the village of Karkpet, where we arrived about 2.30 P.M., and resolved to stop for the night. We had covered about 13 miles.

Our tent was pitched facing the lake, and from our verandah we had a lovely view. The terra-cotta shades of the mountains behind, contrasting with the exquisite dark blue of the lake, made up a picture which, seen through the brilliantly clear air of Ladāk, was one not easily to be forgotten.

The next morning we succeeded, after some trouble, in changing the footsore pony, and marched on 8 miles to Mun, where we breakfasted in a charming little wood of white-stemmed trees, with leaves like those of a willow.

There were three of these little woods in the village all carefully irrigated. These small groves are apparently grown in this treeless land for firewood, and to supply beams for the roofs of houses, just as poplars are grown in Bāltistān.

From Mun I sent Rupsang on with a fresh pony, with instructions to get to Pobrang early next morning, and have yāks and ponies collected for us. Pobrang is the last village on the way to Changchenmo at which transport is obtainable, and it was very essential that we should not be delayed, as the summer was fast passing over.

That evening we reached Spangmik, 7 miles from Mun, and camped for the night on a beautifully smooth stretch of short grass, by a running stream, only about a foot wide, and with an exquisite view of the lovely lake before our tent. All day the blue of that lake had been a constant pleasure to the eye, which turned with a sense of great relief from the glare of the granite dust and gravel over which we travelled, to the soft, deep cobalt colour, and the wonderful shades, from cream colour to terra-cotta, of the hills beyond.

On the morning of the 18th of August, about 10 A.M., we reached Lukung, a hamlet of two houses, 7 miles from Spangmik. Here we found Mahamdu, who had been sent to Leh on the 1st for our letters, etc., waiting for us. So we sat down under a couple of stunted trees that were evidently carefully cherished, and had our breakfast and read our letters.

As we were going on, Colonel Turnbull turned up, also on his way to Changchenmo. He had done better

than I had in the last month, for he had got six gazelle, two burhel, and a 38-inch *Ovis ammon*, all in the Hanlè direction. We reached Pobrang about 1.30 P.M., 13 miles from Spangmik, and encamped for the night. Here I paid up my Shushal and Nimu men for the

TURRUP HOLDING THE RIDING YĀK.

yāks and ponies, and engaged fresh animals for Changchenmo.

It was curious to see the Champas making their calculations of what was due. I totalled up the amount on a bit of paper, and announced the result to them as they sat round me on the grass, with Rupsang as interpreter. They worked out the same sum by a laborious use of the beads they wore round their necks, and appeared much gratified and rather surprised that our results tallied.

Knowing that we should probably have some hard marching and stalking in Changchenmo, I hired two ponies to be used by the servants and shikāris as occasion might arise, as well as two for my wife and self. I also engaged a local man called Turrup, who knew Changchenmo, to come with us and point out the likely places for game, and a smart Shushal boy called Surnām to assist generally about the camp.

As I knew there was a chance that my wife might have to ride a yāk, I placed her saddle on one of these animals and put her up. The yāk was perfectly quiet and docile, but like all his kind a very slow traveller.

In the evening Colonel Turnbull and I settled that I was to go first to the Kugrang nala to look for wild yāk, and he towards Kepsang for antelope. The same evening I arranged for a man to go to Leh with letters and to bring out our mail.

CHAPTER XVII

AUGUST 19-26—POBRANG TO KUGRANG

Character of Changchenmo valley—No inhabitants—Little fuel—Bitter wind—Hot sun—Chorkangma—Mr. Vaughan—Marsemik Lā—Rimdi—Pămzăl—Gogra—Raw and cold—Yet sun very hot—Herd of wild yāk—One large bull—Who charged when wounded—Measurement of bull—Search for rest of herd.

The valley of Changchenmo, which we were about to visit, is one of the most hopelessly dreary places I have ever seen. Its average elevation above the sea is about 15,000 feet, and the only track into it from the west leads over the Marsemik Lā (18,420 feet), one of the highest passes in Kashmir. The valley is entirely uninhabited except for a short time in the summer, when the salt traders who come down from the Tibet highlands pass through it on their way to Rupshu, or a sportsman enters it in pursuit of game, or the neighbouring Champas send their herds into it for pasture. The different places to which names have been given have become known as encamping grounds, mainly because grass and water are there available in the summer months. Firewood is, I believe, only to be had at one spot, Pămzăl; but here there is no grass. The

fuel used by the very few people who ever pass through this inhospitable region consists of the dry roots of bortza[1] and dapshang, and the droppings of wild asses (kyang) and travellers' yāks. The plants mentioned are only procurable in some places, and, as may be imagined, the droppings are not much to depend on. The cold, even in summer, is considerable, and in winter it must be almost arctic.

For the greater part of the day a strong wind blows, bitterly cold even in August. It usually began, we found, about eleven o'clock, and did not sink till about an hour before dark. In the Kugrang nala it always blew downwards in the afternoon, and in the main valley always up the stream. This wind was the most trying thing which we had to encounter. When travelling, my wife and I could not hear each other speak unless our ponies were side by side; and every day I had to smear my face well with vinolia cream to prevent the skin peeling, while she always wore a thick gauze veil. Curious to say, the sun was very powerful. If behind us, our backs would feel scorched, while our hands required fur gloves to keep them warm. The air was never anything but cold, and the wind was always bitter no matter how hot the sun blazed down.

When travelling here we must have presented a peculiar appearance. We each wore a Jaeger night-cap to keep our ears from being frozen, while a broad hat of sola pith was required to protect the head from the sun. Besides the gauze veil my wife generally had a knitted woollen shawl tied over her hat. The hands were pro-

[1] A plant similar to dapshang, and the principal fuel of Tibet.

tected by fur gloves, and, as we started, the toilet of each was usually completed by a large pair of blue goggles, which we found a great protection against the pitiless wind and the flying dust.

On the 19th of August we all marched on to Chorkangma, where we stopped for breakfast. The spot is not inhabited, but it bears a name, as water, fuel, and grass are procurable.

While at our meal we heard a shot, and a few minutes after were joined by a sportsman, whom the Colonel recognised as Mr. Vaughan of the Border Regiment, who was on his way back to Leh. He had just bagged a hare. He had spent five weeks, he told us, in Changchenmo, and had got two good yāk bulls[1] and four antelope. He had seen no *Ovis ammon* worth shooting. It appeared that he had got the bulls in the nala to which I was going, and had shot them on the 3rd of the month. It was a chance, then, as to whether any more animals had come to the nala since or not. Vaughan had been particularly unlucky in the matter of *Ovis ammon*. He had been in Ladāk since early in May, specially in pursuit of these sheep, and had not seen a single shootable ram. After breakfast he went to his tent, which was close by, and we three rode on over the Marsemik Lā, the highest pass we had so far crossed. There was no snow on it then, though plenty was to be seen on the neighbouring peaks.

The descent to Rimdi on the other side was rather

[1] The measurements were:—1st bull—horns 30″, and height at shoulder 14 hands 3 inches; 2nd bull—horns 28″, and height at shoulder 17 hands 1 inch. The smaller bull had the better head.

steep and very stony. We got in about 5 P.M., having done over 14 miles, and were glad to find plenty of grass for the animals, and a comparatively pleasant camping ground, beside good water, for ourselves. The only difficulty was fuel, of which there was very little, and that only droppings.

The 20th found the three of us marching down the Rimdi river, on a path made on shale, slate, and stones, and for the greater part of the day with a strong cold wind blowing in our faces. We reached the point where the Rimdi flows into the Changchenmo river about 4 P.M., and here with some difficulty found a dry camping ground amongst a number of tamarisk bushes, which helped to shelter us from the terrible wind and supplied abundance of fuel. The water of the river was the colour of pea-soup owing to the silt in suspension, except at the side, where it flowed gently over a wide bank of sand, and had time to deposit some of the load it carried. There was next to no grass for the animals, so for them the place was a bad one to have to stop in. There was, however, no alternative, the next ground being over 10 miles on. The spot we occupied is called Tsolu on the map, but is generally known to the yāk-men as Pămzăl. It is about 15 miles from Rimdi.

During the march one of the yāk loads got over-turned while the animals were crossing a stream. The load contained things chiefly belonging to the Champas, who lost some of their sattoo. The cleaning-rod of my carbine was amongst these things, and would have been lost, but that Colonel Turnbull's orderly happened to pick it up.

The next day we crossed the river at a ford about 5 miles further on, where the water was only about 3 feet deep, but was flowing very fast. As the baggage animals were some distance behind, we breakfasted at the ford after crossing, so as to see everything safely over. The yāks and ponies had no trouble, but the goats and sheep were carried down some distance, and only got over with difficulty. We had bought, at R.1 each,[1] five sheep at Pobrang for food, and had some sixteen or eighteen goats to supply us with milk.

Shortly after this we parted from Colonel Turnbull, who went on up the river to Kyām, while we turned north to Gogra, where the Kugrang river joins the Changlung. Here we found a few stone walls put up for shelter by the nomads, and plenty of grass; and, though it was only about 3 P.M. when we arrived, and we had only done 11 miles, we resolved to camp, so as to give the baggage animals time to have a good feed to make up for their starvation of the day before.

It was very cold and raw when we got in, and clouds and mist were blowing down the valley, driven by a bitter wind. As it turned out, it was lucky we stopped when we did, for the tents were hardly up when rain came down pretty smartly, and made things very unpleasant for every one. The fuel all got wet, and very little was obtainable, for droppings were not plentiful; there was no bortza and very little dapshang. As a consequence our men had a bad time of it, and even in our tent it was very cold. The wind swung round after we got in, and blew into the front, so that we were unable

[1] This was the usual price in Rupshu.

to dine in the verandah as usual, but had to go right inside.

During the night the rain changed to snow, and when we woke on the 22nd we found the tent quite white, though the ground was only wet. The thermometer registered 40° F., but it felt very much colder. It was spitting snow, too, and the air was so raw and cold that it was with great difficulty the yāk-men could be roused to go for the transport animals, which of course being loose, as usual, during the night, had wandered off some distance to graze. This made us late in starting, and we did not get off till just ten o'clock.

For some time after I continued to wear, though walking, the heavy ulster I had started in. About noon we found some low walls of stones, and were thankful to obtain shelter behind them from the cruel wind while we had our breakfast. It was a curious situation. The sun was blazing down on us, and a metal napkin ring got so hot we could hardly touch it. At the same time, if I raised my head above the wall my nose felt as if it would be skinned by the bitter wind. We made a short march, and camped at a grassy spot about 8 miles up the Kugrang nala. No game was sighted *en route*.

On the 23rd we only went about 6 miles up the nala, for fear that the camp would be seen or winded by any game that might be about at the upper end. Having ponies we knew we could go a good way beyond in the course of a day. We found a nice piece of grass close to the river and fairly sheltered, where we resolved to stay for a few days while we explored the nalas around; for at this point, besides the main nala, we saw several

ravines opening into it from each side. We breakfasted here, and afterwards I went on with Turrup and the two shikāris, but we saw nothing except five female *Ovis ammon* and two yellow wolves, whom we disturbed in the act of stalking the sheep. The wolves did not

FURTHEST CAMP IN THE KUGRANG VALLEY.

wait to give me a shot, but disappeared quickly up the hillside.

That night the clouds cleared away, and the cold was great. The thermometer in our tent stood at 30° when I got up at half-past six. The water in a metal dish some 3 inches deep, left outside during the night, was found a solid block of ice in the morning.

The two shikāris, Turrup, and I, left about 7.30 A.M., each on a pony, and proceeded up the northern side of the nala. About nine we sighted, from the top of a

small hill, two herds of wild yāk, one consisting of twenty-six and the other of eleven animals. Some were lying down, but the majority were feeding along the south side of the nala. They were about 3 miles off, and as the wind was blowing up towards them, we decided to wait till it should change, as it generally does in this valley, some time between ten and twelve. So we went down the hill to the nearest stream, and had breakfast, but without lighting a fire, for fear of the smoke disturbing the game. After breakfast we went up the hill again, and watched the herds through the glasses till about noon, when, as we had expected, the wind changed and began blowing down the valley.

Then we mounted our ponies, and getting into the bed of the main stream, went up in the direction of the pasture where the yāks were. Before starting, we had noticed with satisfaction that the two herds had amalgamated, and had gone up towards a still narrower part of the nala, but one in which several low hills occupied the middle, the main stream there flowing along the foot of the northern range. The combined herd was under the southern range, to the south of the low hills just mentioned, and was, when last seen, slowly grazing its way up the ravine. At the foot of the small hills we left the four ponies with Turrup, and the two shikāris and I proceeded up the slopes. From the crest of the first hill nothing could be seen of the game, and we went cautiously on to the next. From that three or four yāks were visible, but they were too far off, so making a long detour to the right, we went up a hill still nearer the pasture on which the herds were.

Lying flat down and pushing the Lee-Metford in front of me, I got behind a stone on the summit, and saw a large number of yāks in front of me, most of them some 250 to 350 yards off. It was easy enough to make out the principal bull of the herd, he was so much larger than the rest, but I could not distinguish any others of a decent size, though I saw two or three small ones. I lay where I was for some ten minutes, trying to make out which to fire at after the first shot at the big bull, but could not come to any satisfactory conclusion. The animals were entirely unconscious of danger, some were lying down chewing the cud, and some feeding quietly about. The big bull was sometimes grazing, sometimes looking about him, but all the time moving more or less to the west, that is, to my right and up the nala. I did not like risking a shot at the distance he was at, and examined the ground to my right to see if there was any chance of getting nearer. I noticed a small crest somewhat lower than where I was and nearer to the herd, and resolved to try and get there. So I slid backwards and motioned to the shikāris to do the same.

Making a short detour, we went towards the crest I had noted, when I saw that we should have to cross a bit of low-lying ground in view of two of the herd, who were lying down with their heads turned towards us. So, telling the shikāris to remain in shelter, I lay down flat and began worming myself along the dangerous bit. When about half-way across one of the two yāks got up, and I made sure, as I stopped and laid my head on the ground, that I had been seen. But the yāk merely stretched itself, and, to my great relief, began grazing. So I crawled on, and

finally reached a small rock I had been going for, and from behind which I had a capital view of the herd. The large bull was then about 200 yards from where I lay, moving slowly to my right front, and about three-quarters broadside on. As this position insured the bullet going well up into his vitals, I aimed at his ribs and let drive. On receiving the shot he whisked his tail and swung round facing to my left. This exposed his other side, so sitting up I gave him a second bullet, to which he made no response except by moving forward a few steps. Meantime the rest of the herd had run together, and began making off to the right up a small hill, over the crest of which they shortly disappeared.

Seeing the big bull standing still and not attempting to follow, I did not waste another bullet on him, but ran for the crest over which the herd had gone as fast as the shortness of breath arising from an altitude of about 17,000 feet would allow me, and on topping the rise saw the herd, about 350 yards or so off, standing still. It was too far to distinguish between bulls and cows, and as they were looking at me, stalking was out of the question. So I went back to the big bull, and saw him lying down where I had left him. Putting in another cartridge I walked up, followed by the Kashmiri. The bull was lying with his back to us as we advanced, but hearing our footsteps on the gravel he looked round. The instant he saw us he got up, and turning, lowered his head with a grunt, and came at us in a lumbering canter. Abdulla having no weapon, and doubtful, as he afterwards admitted, as to whether I could stop him with the

toy in my hand, promptly bolted. The bull looked very fine as he came on, and the thought flashed through my mind, as I stood watching him, that his photograph taken then would be worth having. I waited till the gray muzzle was about ten yards off, and then raising the rifle, saw the bead gleam for an instant on the dark hair

YĀK (shot on 24th August).
Length on curve, 29″. Circumference, 13″. Tip to tip, 15¼″.
(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

of the forehead as I pressed the trigger. The next moment the sharp crack of the .303 was followed by the heavy fall of the bull, who went over stone dead, with a bullet through the brain.

The men now came up, and all expressed their admiration of the tiny weapon with which it had been possible to kill so large an animal. Then we proceeded to skin the bull and take off his head. First, however, I photographed him as he lay, and measured him. It was nearly impossible to get his forelegs into proper position for measuring his height, and I feel sure that what the tape showed, viz. 14 hands and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, was below what he had actually stood. His length from the tip of his nose to the end of his short tail, without making the tape dip for the hollow of his neck, was 12 feet 1 inch. The horns were just over 29 inches, with a girth of 13 inches.

It was half-past three when we began skinning, and it was just five when we started for the tents. The Kashmiri and I went ahead on our ponies, Rupsang following behind, with Turrup driving the fourth pony, which had as much as it could carry in the skin and head of the bull. We reached camp about 8.30 P.M., much to the relief of my wife, who could not think what had occurred to delay us.

We were late starting on the morning of the 25th, as the bull's head had to be cleaned and his skin stretched. When this was done I set off with a number of the yāk-men and some of the yāks, to fetch in the meat, and to see if the rest of the herd was anywhere about. I photographed the place where the bull had been shot, and afterwards went on up the nala some distance looking for the yāks, but though I went a very long way I saw nothing of the herd. Then I turned back, and got into camp at dusk.

The 26th was spent in doing miscellaneous jobs that had been left unattended to, while marching and shooting. The meat of the bull was highly appreciated in the camp, and my wife and I found the tongue we had for dinner, and some ox-tail soup that the cook made, very excellent indeed.

TOP OF THE KUGRANG VALLEY IN CHANGCHENMO, WHERE THE YĀK WAS SHOT (p. 305).

CHAPTER XVIII

AUGUST 27 TO SEPTEMBER 5—KUGRANG TO POBRANG

Gogra—Kyām—Hot springs—Toothache—Ningh Rhi—Buck antelope missed—Three out of four dropped—Long chase after one antelope—Day in camp on 31st—Tātahor nala—*Ovis ammon*—Fourth and fifth antelope—Sixth antelope—Return march to Pămzăl—Up Rimdi valley—Way in which Ladāk rivers dry up—Bad path—Cold at Rimdi—Charms of Pobrang—Division of things.

THERE being no probability of seeing another bull, I resolved to leave the Kugrang nala, and make for the antelope ground at the eastern end of Changchenmo, on the edge of Tibet. Turrup, whom I consulted on the subject, recommended Ningh Rhi, a march beyond Kyām; so on the 27th of August we packed up our traps, and travelled down the stream to our old quarters at Gogra, a distance of about 14 miles.

On the 28th we moved to Kyām, 7 miles, where we found a small encampment of nomads grazing their flocks of sheep in the neighbourhood of the hot springs there. From here I sent Mahamdu back to Leh for letters, etc., and directed him, when passing through Pobrang, to send us a supply of sattoo, which was running short.

The hot springs at Kyām hardly deserve the name.

The water is only lukewarm, and rises in several places through black mud in a small marsh.

Unfortunately, on the 27th, my wife got an attack of toothache; and, though she muffled her head up well, the bitter wind was very trying. The next day going to Kyām she was worse (which was the reason we made so short a march), and I considered the advisability of giving up the antelope and getting out of this terrible valley. But she was very plucky and would not hear of it, and as I knew she would have several days' rest at Ningh Rhi, we settled to go on.

Accordingly, the 29th saw us at Ningh Rhi, 11 miles from Kyām, a lonely spot, almost entirely surrounded by low hills, but with excellent grass and a lovely little, clear stream. Of course the wind was a great trial as usual, and my wife suffered much on the march; but as soon as the tent was up she was in shelter, and a couple of days' rest made her all right again.

On the morning of the 30th we started to look for antelope. We went across the border into Tibet, over the Gang Lā, and searched the hillsides about Troakpo Kurpo, but without success, seeing nothing but large numbers of kyang and three female *Ovis ammon*. Then we swung round towards the north, and at 10.30 A.M. sat down to breakfast by one of the few streams we met with.

After breakfast, we crossed the ridge to our north, close to the Kepsang station (20,036 feet), and when searching the valley beyond with the glasses, detected two buck antelope grazing on a patch of grass below us, and about 2 miles off. While watching them, a third

appeared, and as the horns seemed to be reasonably good, we determined to stalk them.

I filled the magazine of the rifle, and directed Turrup to stay with the four ponies where they were, till signalled to come down. The wind was blowing strong towards our left front as we went down, and therefore partly in the direction of the antelope, but still not enough, we thought, to create any danger. The slope of the hillside was uneven, and it was just beyond one of the knolls in the contour of the ground that the three antelope had been seen.

Some little time before arriving at this knoll, and while ascending another, we suddenly came on a buck feeding by himself, and not more than 80 yards off. As his horns were a fair length, I acted on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I hurriedly lay down, and without noticing that the 200 yards' leaf of the rifle was up, fired at the buck. Of course, the bullet went over him. The buck bolted away to the right, and beyond him a herd of some ten kyang also started off. The next cartridge was a missfire (the second I had had that season), and the third bullet also went over the flying animal's back. The buck now turned and went to my left, passing through the herd of kyang, whom he quickly distanced, though the asses too were going at their best pace. Judging that the antelope would be quite 200 yards off before I could send a fourth shot after him, I looked at my sighting with a view to putting the first movable leaf up, and then saw that it was up already. This explained my first miss when the animal was quite close, and put me out so much that I was not anywhere near him with either of the next two

shots I fired. The antelope was by this time almost out of sight, and the kyang had got a long way out on the plain, and had turned round to watch proceedings from what they considered a safe distance.

I was greatly vexed, as may be imagined, and began wondering what had become of the three bucks first seen. I examined the plain and the slopes around with the glasses, but could see nothing of them. Thinking that they had bolted over the former, and were probably in some of the hollows which were sure to mark its surface, the two shikāris and I started off to explore. It never occurred to any of us as possible, that with several shots fired within half a mile of where the herd had been seen, it could still be in the original spot. But we had been reckoning without the force of the wind, and without considering the small noise made by the .303.

For just as we crossed the stream, I heard a startled exclamation from the Kashmiri behind me, who instantly dropped to the ground and began worming himself backwards. As I followed the direction of his eyes and threw myself on my face, I caught sight of a buck lying beyond the knoll, behind which we had originally seen the herd. Clearly none of this group had been startled, either by the sound of the shots fired within half a mile of them, or by the sight of the single buck and the herd of kyang flying over the plain. I could hardly believe my eyes as I wriggled back, and quickly followed the men out of sight of the buck.

Taking the rifle I started for the knoll, and motioning to the shikāris to stay where they were, I ran stooping to its foot, and then crawled to its top on my

hands and knees. As I raised my head cautiously over its crest, I saw three antelope standing between 150 and 200 yards off, and looking towards me. Apparently they had seen us when we, a few minutes before, had detected them, but had not quite clearly made out what the danger was. The three looked to have about the same sized horns, so selecting one which was three-quarters broadside on to me, and passing my finger over the leaves to make sure the permanent sight only was up, I took a fine sight and fired at his shoulder. He dropped to the shot, and the next bullet I sent after one of his companions as he bolted, but without effect. As I was putting in another cartridge, I saw a buck I had not before noticed come running down from a hollow to my right. As, if he stopped, he would give me a nice broadside shot, and there was every probability of his doing so, I waited, and after going a few yards he came to a standstill, looking in my direction, and evidently not clear as to what was the matter. I explained things to him by putting a bullet into his chest, upon which he staggered forward for a few yards, and then rolled over.

Meantime, the other two had been bolting away to my left across the stream, so, running forward to where I could get a better view, I sent my last few bullets after the nearer one. One of these, fired with a full bead and the 300 yards' sight up, dropped him at what must have been quite 400 yards, and the last of this group of four continued his way alone and untouched. I then got up and went to inspect the fallen. The first was just alive, but the second was stone dead.

While looking at them, Rupsang called out that the third buck had got up and begun to move off. Turning round I saw the animal going slowly away. Not having another cartridge, I sent the Kashmiri to watch the wounded beast, while I went back to meet the ponies and get a fresh packet of cartridges from my bag. On reaching them, I took out the packet and jumped on my own nag, directing the Ladāk shikāri, who had followed me, to come along quickly on another. In a few minutes we reached the Kashmiri, who had marked down the wounded buck into a hollow. I got off the pony and crept stealthily forward, and soon saw the antelope struggling with its feet in the air. As I got up to it the struggles ceased, and the animal lay motionless with its head on the ground. I knelt down beside it and, having my rifle in my right hand, put my left on one of the horns as a precaution, in case the beast should not be really dead. As the Kashmiri came up, I let go the horn for a second, and, pointing to the buck's neck, said, "Quickly cut his throat." As I said this the animal suddenly sprang to its feet and bolted.

I was so astonished, that though he was not 20 yards from me when I got the rifle to my shoulder, I missed him clean. I then began running after him, but saw at once he could go faster than I. So I went back for the pony, and started off as fast as the little brute could trot, for I could not manage to get a canter out of him.

The buck was gaining, but he presently lay down, and let me get within a hundred yards or so, when he started off again. He did this two or three times, and

I began seriously to fear I should lose him. Ahead of us was a steep hill, and he turned along the foot rather than try and go up, as I was afraid at first he would do. A short distance off there was a small mound at the foot of the hill, formed by *débris* which had slipped down the side. The buck went over this and out of my sight into the depression beyond. Not seeing him go on, it was clear he had lain down again, so perceiving I could get close to him unseen, I got off the pony, moored the little beast by putting a large stone on the reins, and stole forward with the rifle at full cock. As I got to the top of the mound of *débris*, the buck, who was lying as I expected in the hollow beyond, got up and went off. This time I was more careful, and sent a bullet through him behind the shoulder, and he dropped for the last time. A few minutes after Abdulla came up and cut his throat.

Then the Kashmiri said that he had seen the fourth buck go up a small hill to the north of where we were, and suggested we should go after it. Leaving Rupsang and Turrup to bring the buck just killed to where the other two were lying, which was on our way back to camp, Abdulla and I started after the fourth buck, but though we searched for over an hour we saw no sign of him.

So we went back to where by this time all three animals were, and the men set to work to skin the bodies and take off the heads.

The first buck had been struck just behind the left shoulder, and the bullet had gone out in front of the right hip, making a large hole at this point. The second buck had received the bullet in his chest, close to the point of the left shoulder, the missile going out through

the right shoulder low down, and making mincemeat of the right forearm.

The case of the third buck was the most curious. The first bullet had, without breaking up, gone through the withers, apparently below the backbone and just above the vitals carried in the chest. The two holes in the skin were practically identical in size, so it was clear the bullet must have left much as it entered. This was the first instance within my experience of one of the Jeffrey bullets not breaking up on impact. The second bullet caught the animal behind the left shoulder, and passed out through the right, where it made the usual large wound. Why the buck should have fallen to the first bullet, which had evidently inflicted only a slight flesh-wound, and then, when bolting, been repeatedly compelled to lie down from its effects, I could not understand.

TIBET ANTELOPE
(Shot on 30th August).
Length on curve, 25″.
Circumference, 5¾″. Tip to tip, 11½″.
(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

The first buck was lying 191 paces from where I fired at him, and the second 252. The ground was nearly level. The horn measurements were as follows: First buck, 24 inches; second, 25 inches; third, 24½ inches.

The two Ladāk men, one riding and the other leading

the pony laden with the meat, horns, and skins, went back to camp by the way we had come, while Abdulla and I went another way on the off-chance of seeing more game. We saw, however, nothing but kyang, and got in about dusk. My wife was very much better for the day's quiet and warmth.

On the 31st I did not go out, but sent Rupsang and Turrup to examine the Silung Kongma and Silung Burma nalas near us, while I saw to the head skins being properly taken off and dried, and the other skins stretched. I took the opportunity also to thoroughly clean the Lee-Metford, which was getting somewhat stiff in its action.

The next morning (1st of September) the four of us started for the Tātahor nala, recommended by Turrup as good antelope ground—a recommendation amply justified by results. This must have been the local name for the long valley marked on the map as Kone Rong. To reach it we had to go up a small nala opening from the north-east on the one in which our tents stood, and cross a low pass at its head. Then before us lay a very long and wide valley, stretching almost east and west, the extremity of which could not be seen from where we stood.

Going down the mountain side, the Kashmiri presently sat down and began using the telescope. In a few minutes he announced a small herd of *Ovis ammon*, three herds of antelope, and a herd of wild yāk! Hardly able to believe my ears, I took the glass, and saw three *Ovis ammon* close by. Beyond them I detected a herd of antelope, and on the plain two more, but these were

so distant I could not make out whether any had horns. Further out on the plain I saw some large dark objects moving slowly, which certainly were very like yāk, but I was not sure. The shikāris, too, were a little doubtful, though from the size and colour they inclined to the belief that the animals were yāk.

Knowing from the experience of the previous day that the sound of the Lee-Metford is not enough to disturb game outside of half a mile, I resolved to attack the herds we saw in the order of their proximity to us, and accordingly started to stalk the *Ovis ammon.*

After a short detour to take advantage of some rising ground, we lay down and advanced on our hands and knees, the two shikāris being with me. Turrup had been left behind in a hollow with the four ponies. Suddenly we caught sight of the rams about 150 yards off, and instantly lay down flat. I crept on alone, and presently, raising my head to look, found myself face to face with one of the rams. After a glance of startled amazement, he jumped up and made off, followed by the two others. The three stopped after going a few yards and stood still, some 120 yards off, looking at me. I did not think any of the heads shootable, and turning round to the shikāris, said so. The Kashmiri said the middle one of the three was a good head. Looking at it again I began to feel doubtful, so thinking that Abdulla with his experience was more likely to be right than I was, I raised the rifle and fired. The rams moved off slowly at the sound of the shot, the one fired at being last. Presently he stopped and let the others go on, and I knew he was hit.

I had fancied I had heard the thud of the shot, and had certainly seen the splash of the bullet beyond the ram; but I knew the splash in the ground would be the same, whether the missile had gone through or missed clean, and the thud was so slight that, until I saw the animal stay behind his fellows, I could not be sure I had hit. I may note that this was the first occasion on which I had ever heard the sound of a .303 bullet striking an animal. I waited where I was till the ram disappeared over the next ridge, and then followed. We came on blood almost immediately, but could not pursue, as doing so would have involved frightening the antelope, which were in the nala just beyond the crest over which the rams had gone.

When we got to the ridge we had the satisfaction of seeing the antelope all lying down, evidently quite undisturbed by the shot which had been fired within 600 yards of them. This was the more surprising as no wind had yet arisen, it not being more than 8 A.M. The question then was, how to get at the antelope in the nala. There were five of them, two fair bucks and three does. It was evident we could not go down the hillside in front, nor could we go up that to the right, as there was no way of crossing the nala unseen. The ram we proposed to leave till afterwards, as I knew he could not go far, with that bullet through the middle of his body.

The only thing to be done evidently was, to descend into the plain and make a wide circuit and get into the nala on the far side, on which the antelope were sitting. This we accordingly did, riding the ponies side by

side, so as to hide the further off ponies behind the nearest one. Although, however, we made a round which took us along a circle quite 2 miles or more from the antelope, we must have been detected, for the herd got up as soon as we were well in view, and began moving quietly up the nala. When we got into a depression, we went as fast as we could, till we reached the point where the far side of the nala subsided into the plain. There we left the ponies with Turrup, and I loaded the Lee-Metford.

Then the shikāris and I advanced cautiously up the side of the nala, and soon came in sight of the herd. They were feeding up the ravine, and as the undulations were few between us and the game, I felt doubtful as to whether I could get within range. However, I resolved to try, and leaving the men in a hollow, I started forwards on my hands and knees. Soon this had to be changed for an advance lying flat on my stomach, but when I got to the top of the very gentle rise I was climbing in this fashion, I found one of the bucks looking back, and none of the herd within 300 yards.

Not liking to risk a shot at this range, I crawled back to the shikāris, and we descended into the river-bed, and proceeded up the nala under cover of a high bank. When we thought we must be parallel with the herd, I went alone, slowly and cautiously, up a convenient dry water channel that led up from the main one. Presently I saw the tips of a pair of horns some distance off and crawled on watching them, as far as I could, without exposing myself. After I had gone some way the horns moved forward, and thinking that I was not likely to get

nearer, I sat up. The whole herd was then in view. The buck whose horns I had seen was standing broadside on, looking at me. To his right were the three does, and a good way ahead, and much the furthest off, was the other buck.

I aimed at the first, and had the satisfaction to see him drop to the shot. The second buck did not attempt to run away, but stood watching his companion struggling on the ground. Taking a full bead I let drive at him. He never acknowledged the shot in any way, but walking forward a few steps, stood still. The three does then bolted to the left, but the second buck, instead of following them, moved slowly towards the right, and I felt certain he was hit. I sent a second shot after him, but it had no effect. After stepping the distance (just 202 paces) to the fallen buck, I went after the other, who was going very slowly away. I fired a third shot at him, but he was rather far off and did not stop. When I got within 100 yards I sat down, and dropped him with a bullet through the shoulder. The first bullet had entered at the ribs and gone through, making a bad wound, but it was a little too far behind. The second and third shots had missed clean. He must have been over 250 yards off when the first bullet struck him, for he was much further than the first. The horns of one were 21″, and of the other $23\frac{1}{2}$″. The heads were cut off and placed under a stone, to be picked up on our way back, and we then started to circumvent the second herd.

This group of antelope was on the opposite or northern side of the wide plain which formed the bottom of the valley, and, owing to the wind, the only way to get

within range seemed to be to go along the southern side for some distance, then cross and come up against the wind. We were proceeding to put this manœuvre into effect when we saw two antelope closer than the herd. A glance through the telescope showed them to be both females, and we went on. When right opposite to the two herds we were after we found a spur of the mountain jutting out into the plain. Perceiving that going round the foot of this would inevitably start off the antelope, who would be then only about a mile from us, we went up the spur instead. On arriving at the top we saw in a glen, which was on the opposite side, a small group of three males and five females. Clearly we had no choice but to frighten the herd we had just seen by going on, or to put the other two to flight by making a detour into the plain.

We accordingly sat down and examined carefully the animals on the other side of the plain, and found that there were only two small bucks in one herd, and none at all in the other. We resolved, therefore, to confine our attention to the antelope just below us, but before beginning the stalk sat down to breakfast, as it was close to noon. When it was over—it did not take long, as of course a fire could not be lighted—we went down into the plain, and as we had done before, made a wide detour, and got to the other side of the glen without alarming the three bucks. The females, however, for some unknown reason, made off across the plain while we were going round—an arrangement that suited us very well.

When we reached the point we had been making for we left the ponies and started on our stalk. We

found, on coming in sight of the spot where we had left the bucks, that they had moved on and were grazing. After a long crawl on my stomach I saw the three apparently about 100 yards off. So I sat up, and while they stood looking at me, took aim at one and fired. As usual, I forgot how high the rifle throws for short ranges, and the bullet went over the animal's back. All three bolted across the glen, and I got in a few shots at the leading buck as they went. The last of these dropped him, and the other two escaped.

I was glad to have got even one, though, from the place where I was when I sat up to fire, it was possible to have killed all three. The dead buck was hit on the point of the shoulder, the bullet coming out near the opposite hip, making as usual a bad wound. He was lying 209 paces—about 180 yards—from where I had fired. The horns measured 21″.

His head was cut off and brought on, and we then went up the main nala to look for the wild yāk. But there were no signs of them, and on examining the ground where we thought we had seen them, there were no marks. Accordingly, as large numbers of kyang were about, and this valley is not supposed to hold wild yāk, we came to the conclusion we had been mistaken, and that what we had supposed might be yāk were in reality wild asses. So we turned homeward.

The *Ovis ammon* I had fired at was tracked up and found lying dead, about 100 yards from where we had seen him disappear. The horn was only $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches, I regret to say, so I would not take it home, and felt very sorry I had not acted on my own judgment and let the

beast go. The men took the skin and some of the meat. We saw one more buck in the valley, but could not get within range.

As we were going down the last ravine, and were about 2 miles from the tents, which were plainly in sight, a couple of bucks which had been lying down close to the head of the stream jumped up on seeing us approach. We got off our ponies, and letting the antelope move off out of sight, followed quickly. They went along the hillside in full view of the camp, and my wife was called out of her tent to see them. As soon as they had disappeared over a ridge to the north of the camp we raced on, and lying down below the crest of the ridge, I crawled forward, and caught sight of the pair going up the opposite side of the hollow. They were about 200 yards off, and I, being tired after a long day and partly out of breath, missed with the three shots I had before they disappeared.

Altogether, in the two days I was out, I had seen 13 shootable buck, fired at 11, and bagged 6, so I had every reason to be content. As I did not want any more antelope, I settled to leave next morning, but I wished particularly to return to the Marsemik Lā *via* Chang Burma, to see if I could not pick up a decent *Ovis ammon*. On inquiring, however, I found that there was not enough flour in camp to last the men for the time it would take us by that route, and that it was necessary to go back the way we had come so as to meet the man bringing out food from Pobrang.

I was therefore obliged reluctantly to give orders to retrace our steps next day, but said that an effort must be

made to do a long march, so as to get into Pămzăl (Tsolu) by evening. This all were prepared to try, so anxious was every soul in camp to get out of Changchenmo.

Next morning (the 2nd of September), I found when I went out of the tent about sunrise, that the maximum and minimum thermometer I had hung up on one of the ropes was then standing at 22°, and had fallen to 20° during the night. In the tent the temperature must have gone down to 25° or 26°. Yet the water there was not frozen. I am unable to account for this curious result, which I noticed on several occasions. Many a time the thermometer registered several degrees of frost inside, and yet water standing in the tent in a metal tumbler was not turned to ice.

We reached Kyām about 11 A.M. without encountering much wind, and that only when we got near our former halting-place. Here we stopped for breakfast, and let the yāks go past us. About two we went on and overtook the baggage as it was about to cross the Changchenmo river for the second time. Owing to precipitous rocks on the left bank, not far above Pămzăl, this double crossing between Pămzăl and Kyām is necessitated.

Here we met the coolie who had been sent in on the 19th for our letters, returning with them and the supply of sattoo, which had been ordered from Pobrang when Mahamdu passed through on the 28th. The last was brought on a donkey, which also carried some parcels and a large supply of newspapers, forming part of our mail. The man returned with us to Pămzăl, which we reached about 6 P.M., the yāks getting in about half an

hour afterwards. It was a late arrival in camp, but the march had been a long one (22 miles on the map, and about 27 in reality), and every one was glad to have got on so far.

Our course all the next day was up the Rimdi valley, than which a more uninteresting journey it would be hard to imagine. Where we entered the valley the river was dry, but about half-way up water once more appeared.

This habit which many of the Ladāk rivers have, of flowing down a certain distance from their source and then drying up, is curious, but not altogether unnatural. In most cases where it occurs the spring is small, the nala into which it flows a long one, and no tributaries join it. The soil is more or less sandy, and evaporation assists to reduce the stream. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should disappear.

We had breakfast in a small rocky nala, where we had breakfasted on the 20th of August, and let the yāks, as usual, pass us. Near this I took a photograph of the gorge, which is typical of the desolation which characterises the Changchenmo valley. After a couple of hours or so we went on, the path getting worse and worse as we neared Rimdi. Towards the end it became nothing more than a track, made in the loose shale and slate that formed the hillside by animals that had passed over before. The stuff, which was simply *débris* from the mountains above, and formed a single steep slope from the summit of the ridge to the water at the bottom of the nala, was lying at the angle of incidence, and the ponies sank into it often above the fetlocks. The apology for a path led along the side, a good way above the stream, and a false step

LOOKING DOWN THE RIMDI VALLEY.

would have had very serious consequences. Altogether, it was about the worst path we had ever ridden, and if the ponies had not been very sure-footed and careful they could hardly have got over it at all.

Before reaching this bad part we came across an encampment of some Pobrang men, who were returning from Tibet with salt. The loads, which were all in small double bundles for carriage by sheep, were arranged neatly so as to form a kind of square fencing, within which the sheep were to be confined at night. When we passed they were out grazing, and a single black tent alone stood beside the enclosure.

We had a cold night at Rimdi. Though sleeping in a sheep-skin bag, with four blankets over that, I was waked by the cold before dawn, and when I got up and went out at daybreak, I found the thermometer hanging on the tent rope standing at 19° F., and it had fallen to 18° F. during the night. By 7.30 A.M., after the sun had been shining for over an hour, the thermometer had only risen to 25° F. inside our tent. Yet though this was 7° below freezing-point the water there did not solidify. When, however, I put a tumbler containing some outside our tent, it had a film of ice over it in a minute ; and when I poured some on the ground, the water had turned to ice almost before it ceased to flow. My wife, however, perhaps because she always had an eider down quilt, and often a fur rug also over her blankets, never suffered from cold at night all the time we were in Changchenmo.

From the top of the Marsemik Lā, which we reached about nine o'clock, we walked down to Chorkangma, where we had breakfast sitting in the dry bed of the

stream, so as to be as much as possible out of the terrible wind.

We reached Pobrang about 4 P.M., and very thankful we all were to be in a valley with cultivation once more around us. Some of the barley had been cut, but a good deal was still standing, and the sight of the ripe grain as "waves of shadow" went over it under the light breeze, the warm sun above, the green grass below, and the clear stream at our feet, were all perfectly delightful after the cold wind and rocks and snow of Changchenmo.

As far as I know, only two ladies, Mrs. Kinloch and Mrs. Littledale, visited the Changchenmo valley before my wife went, and it is not likely that many will follow in the steps of these three.

We halted on the 5th to rest and to separate our things, as from this point I had resolved to start for Hanlè, to try and pick up a gazelle or two. The reason for this change of programme was, that I wanted to make my bag complete if it were possible. Burhel, uryal, and gazelle alone now remained to be got from amongst the animals of Lādak. Of these burhel and uryal, I knew, were to be found near Leh, but from all accounts the nearest place for a gazelle was Hanlè. This district was many marches from Leh, and being high up amongst the mountains was bound, now that the summer was practically over, to be very cold. As a journey there was sure to involve a good deal of hardship for a lady, it was obviously best that my wife should travel quietly back by the direct route to Leh, taking every one but the Kashmiri shikāri with her; while I went to Hanlè with only Abdulla, lightly equipped, and able to get fast

over the ground. So it was settled. Rupsang, who had proved himself a most reliable and excellent man, could be trusted, I knew, to make all necessary arrangements for my wife in the matter of transport, while Abdulla would do all that I wanted, and he and I alone could travel fast.

The cook prepared for me a quantity of scones, so as to save the necessity of making chupatties *en route*. Butter, cakes of soup, cheese, and even figs were also packed up for me, so I saw I should be well off in the matter of creature comforts, far better off than I had been in Bāltistān. The Kashmir tent was, of course, to go with my wife, and I settled to take the camp equipage which I had found so useful in Bāltistān, viz. the two 30-lb. tents, one yākdān, one store box, one kiltā of stores, and my bedding. This last on the present occasion was to include my blanket mattress, as the cold would be severe. As before, bed, table, and chair were left behind.

The same day the skins and horns were carefully packed, to be sent into Srinagar from Leh, arsenical soap being applied to the eyes, lips, nostrils, and ears of the head skins.

CHAPTER XIX

SEPTEMBER 6-13—POBRANG TO KIONGMA CHUMIK

Shikāri's fall from his pony—Meruk—Thinn spring—Nowi—Fording the Indus—Hanlè river—Sango nala—Hanlè—Giato sent for—Bitter wind—Kiongma Chumik—Stalking of gazelles in the open found hopeless—Arrival of Giato—First goa shot—Hopeless stalking for the rest of the day—Third day's work—The herd of three—Second goa shot out of herd of five—Attempts to drive the herds fail—Careless stalking—Third goa shot—Proper method of stalking goa—Choice of routes returning.

NEXT morning, the 6th of September, the things to go with me were loaded on four ponies, and those intended for Leh on ten yāks and two ponies. I also engaged a pony for Abdulla, and another for myself, as we proposed marching each day as long as it was light. About 8 A.M. we started from Pobrang, quite sorry to leave the pleasant little spot. A mile or two below Lukung we had breakfast together, and a short distance beyond that my wife turned up to the west by the Tankse track, and I went on along the shore of the Pangong Lake.

About 2 miles before reaching Spangmik I came on the shikāri sitting on the ground, and looking very dishevelled. He explained that his pony had suddenly bolted and thrown him, and he was sitting waiting till it

should be brought back, as he had told a herdsman who was looking after some sheep not far off what had happened, and the man had gone after the pony. The laden ponies were in front, and no doubt the runaway would be found with them.

The shikāri had been carrying behind his saddle my lui or Kashmir blanket, in which were fastened up, dumb-bell fashion, my camera and brief bag at one end, and the tiffin basket, kettle, and canteen at the other. The latter articles had at some moment rattled together, and this noise had started the pony off. I examined with anxiety the rifle which Abdulla was also carrying when thrown, and was thankful to find it was apparently uninjured. The shikāri said he was bruised about the face, and the small of his back was paining him. So I made him mount my pony, and I walked on till we met the truant being led back by one of the pony-men. I then got on the beast and we rode ahead.

By the time it was dusk we found ourselves near Meruk, so we stopped there for the night, having covered about 24 miles.

On the 7th we marched through Shushal, where we changed ponies, and by the time it was getting dusk reached the Thinn spring, close to which there was grazing for the animals, and here we pitched our camp, having come 23 miles.

At Meruk the thermometer had stood at 39° F. in my tent when I got up, but on the exposed upland by the Thinn spring it fell to 31° F. by the morning of the 8th. That day we crossed the Saka Lā, and half an hour before dark arrived at Nowi, opposite the point

where the Hanlè river joins the Indus, and camped close to our old quarters of the 9th of August. The day's journey was 28 miles.

The crossing of the Indus on the morning of the 9th delayed us a good deal, as we were unable to fully load the ponies when going over, owing to the water coming too high up on their bodies. So some of the nags had to make two journeys. The bedding was, for fear of accidents, carried over by the men, and it was amusing to hear them singing as they crossed, just as the other Champas had done at Nimu. After crossing the Indus we forded the Hanlè river, as the path is along the right bank. That evening by sundown we were in sight of the Hanlè monastery, picturesquely perched on a rocky crag jutting out into the valley. Round the foot of this eminence the Hanlè river finds its way, in taking its final bend to the north-west. We camped on a windy plain with thin grass, but with any amount of fine tramsa bushes, at a spot opposite the mouth of the Sango nala. The distance covered in the day was about 20 miles.

Next morning (the 10th) the thermometer stood at 29° in my tent when I got up at daybreak, but the water inside was not frozen. I sent Abdulla on ahead to Hanlè to arrange for ponies, and about 10.30 A.M. reached the few houses, clustered at the foot of the monastery, which form the village. There was some delay in getting the animals, and I took the opportunity to sit down in a small garden and have my breakfast. The garden was about 20 feet long by 6 wide, and boasted of a few stunted willow-trees, a patch of grass in the middle, and two or three small beds with African

marigolds. The whole was surrounded by a wall about 3 feet high. About 12.30 we started with fresh ponies. I was unable to get the local shikāri Giato, of whom Colonel Turnbull had told me, as he was said to be up somewhere in the hills looking after the monastery sheep, but I caused word to be sent to him. The pony-men said, however, they all knew where gazelles were to be had, so we set off. After some miles on the plain, we crossed the Hanlè river and went up into the mountains. Here I saw an immense number of kyang, counting 136 in one herd.

TIBET GAZELLE (shot on 13th September) (p. 351).
Length on curve, 12⅝″. Circumference, 4¾″.
Tip to tip, 5⅛″.
(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

Later on we sighted a lot of gazelles, and I took out my rifle, when, what was my dismay to find that the stock had got quite loose in its socket near the breech. I was unable to account for this, as I had examined the rifle carefully the day the shikāri was thrown from his pony, and had found nothing wrong. But whatever had happened on the 6th it was wrong on the 10th, which was very serious, as of course I could not depend on the weapon in its then condition, and I was not sure that I could repair it. However, we started on the stalk, as I thought I would try whether I could shoot at all with the rifle or not. After a long

stalk we got up to about 150 yards from the herd. But I could see no good bucks. While I was trying to make out something worth firing at we were seen, and the herd bolted. I then fired at the best buck, but missed, and the herd went on for some quarter of a mile or so, and then stopped to graze. Apparently the rifle was of no use unless I could do something to repair it.

We accordingly turned back, and followed the laden ponies towards the camp. There was a strong wind blowing from the south, and coming as it did direct from high peaks which stood out before us covered with snow, it was exceedingly cold. My hands and feet were half frozen before we reached the camping ground, which we did as the sun got below the ridge to our right. The place is known as Kiongma Chumik, and boasts a small spring and some grass. It must be over 17,000 feet above the sea, for a peak close by (Zādo), which did not look 1000 feet higher, is marked as 18,000. The soil is all granite sand, and I had some difficulty in finding a place level enough for my tent. However, a spot was got at last, and shelter from the pitiless wind obtained when the tent was up. The wind here was worse than in Changchenmo, for while just as strong and cold, it did not die down at dusk, but was blowing hard, shaking the whole tent, when I fell asleep about 10 P.M. We had marched that day about 22 miles.

On the morning of the 11th the thermometer was at 28° F. when I was called, and I refused to stir till I saw the sun was almost on my tent. Then I got up, and having had chota hāzri, tied up the rifle after a fashion so as to prevent the stock from wobbling. To guard as far as

possible against further accidents, I carried it myself all day. The pony-men took us to a plain which lay to the north of our camp, and about a mile off. We soon saw a few gazelles wandering about the plain, and then descried a large herd at the edge of a nala which lay immediately to the north. We decided to try and stalk the last if possible. Leaving the ponies on the hillside, Abdulla and I made a detour, and succeeded in arriving within about 400 yards; but there was no means of getting any closer, as the ground between and around the animals was quite open.

I thought at that distance I ought to be able to distinguish which had decent horns, at any rate with the long telescope, but I could see no horns at all, and my shikāri, who knew nothing about this sort of game, said the horns were too small to see. As a matter of fact this was not the case, and the only reason I saw no horns was, as I afterwards learned, that there were no decent bucks in the herd. I did not then know, and the Kashmiri did not know, that bucks with good heads are seldom, at any rate in September, found with the females. So I wasted my time lying within 400 yards of the herd, trying to make out the bucks, and endeavouring to see how I could get nearer, thinking that if I could get closer I should see which were the shootable heads. Presently the antelope got up, and began grazing their way towards the plain. We followed crouching, and finally lay down and endeavoured to worm our way up to them—a perfectly hopeless attempt, as any one with any experience of these beasts would have known. Soon, of course, we were seen, and the antelope scampered off to

about 700 or 800 yards, and then began quietly grazing again, still on the open plain. It was obviously hopeless to try pursuing them as we had been doing, so we descended into the nala and had breakfast.

The regular Hanlè south wind from the snows began as we were finishing, and the rest of the day was consequently one of extreme discomfort. A part of the herd we had been stalking had been seen to go round towards the north-west of a hill, to the south-east of which we had had our breakfast, so we thought we would go up this, on the off-chance of finding the gazelles on ground where a stalk would be possible. In this vain hope we went up the hill. Just as we got to the top, three males came running up from the other side and passed us at full speed, some 80 yards off. I sat down at once, and was slipping a cartridge into the rifle, when it occurred to me that if I fired and missed, I should never see the little beasts again, and that it would be better to let them go, and hunt them up afterwards. Two others came past before the first three were well under the brow of the hill, and these also I let go in accordance with the idea above mentioned. This was another serious mistake, due to want of knowledge of the habits of these animals. I might have fired at and missed each of the five, and it would have made absolutely no difference, as far as finding them again was concerned. For they would have galloped down to the plain, and as soon as they had found themselves with a quarter of a mile of open ground all round, they would simply have begun grazing again.

When the lot had disappeared we went on looking

for the herd we had originally been after, but never saw a sign of it. Then we returned to look for the five, but they also had disappeared. Low down on the plain we saw another herd, all lying down, but it was absolutely unapproachable. However, thinking I might get a long shot, I walked up to within about 400 yards, and then lay down and tried crawling. But it was no use. I was quickly detected, and the herd got up and went away. As I saw no decent bucks, I did not much mind, but the impossibility of getting within range, except by accident, impressed me forcibly, and I began to wonder, as we went back to camp, how in the world the shooting of gazelles was ever accomplished. On arrival in camp, I was glad to find that the local shikāri, Giato, had arrived, for neither the Kashmiri nor I seemed to have much idea how these antelope were to be shot. We were nearly frozen when we got in, and the bitter wind continued, as on the previous night, till after I was asleep, occasionally even finding its way under the flaps of the tent, laden as they were with heavy stones.

The morning of the 12th dawned as usual with a bright sun and no wind, but as the thermometer stood then at 26° in my tent, and there was no advantage to be gained by starting early after the goa, I stayed in bed for an hour. When I got up we went to the place we had hunted the day before, as Giato said there was no better ground. We soon sighted a fair-sized herd, but on examining it with the glasses, the Ladāki said it contained no shootable bucks.

Presently we saw a small herd of three, and these, when viewed through the telescope, were pronounced by

the same authority to be all bucks of fair size. They were moving up the opposite hillside, oddly enough away from the plain, and we resolved to try and get ahead of them. By making a long detour we got on the hill they were ascending, and presently had the satisfaction of seeing them lie down in a small hollow. This was a great bit of luck, and we proceeded to take advantage of it by creeping up to them. Getting a little above, we worked our way downwards towards them. When we thought we were close, Giato sat down and signed to Abdulla to do the same, while I went on alone. Flat on my stomach I crawled on, gently descending all the time. The perspiration dripped from my forehead, and the granite sand worked its way in at my sleeves and elsewhere. Soon I saw three pairs of small horns, and at the same moment the little beasts heard me, for they sprang up instantly, and stood for a second looking in my direction. Perceiving that they had seen me, I also jumped up, and the three started off at top speed. I fired at one, and he fell, and the other two disappeared from view in a hollow as I took the rifle from my shoulder to reload. Here a double barrel would certainly have given me another shot, and possibly another head. It was the only occasion, up to that date, when in using the carbine I had felt that a second barrel would have been of advantage. Presently the two which had escaped got down to the plain and stood still, and I fired a long shot at one of them on the off-chance. The bullet went over him, and the two went on for another quarter of a mile, and then put their heads down to feed. The buck that had fallen was lying some 70 or 80

yards from where I had fired, and we went to him, skinned him, and took off his head. The horns were of fair length, 12¼ inches. The bullet had entered the middle of his off-thigh, and gone out making a large hole in front of his near hind-leg.

This being over, we determined to follow the pair that had gone away, but before doing so, waited till they had gone up a low hill and over the crest. Following as quick as we could, we saw them in the hollow beyond, but out of range. Unfortunately they also saw us, and began moving slowly off, keeping carefully along ground on which there was not a particle of cover. So I set one of the pony-men to watch them, and went back into a hollow to have breakfast. When this was finished we started after the pair again, but it would be wearisome to give details of our long stern chase. Suffice it to say, that though we overtook them several times, we never got within effective range, as the pair took care to keep only in open ground, and the tops of the hills were so flat that we always found they were out of range when we got to the crest, no matter how fast we followed. We gave up about 6 P.M., and went back pretty well frozen by the awful wind.

I did not remember what other men had experienced when pursuing goa, but it struck me from what I saw of Giato's tactics, that unless the animals voluntarily left the grazing ground on the plain, and went into places where they could be stalked, nothing could be done. It was abundantly manifest from these two days' experience, that they were absolutely safe on the plain, as they would let nothing approach nearer than 400 yards. Also that it

was impossible to drive them into broken ground, for they simply would not go. Altogether it seemed very hopeless work, and I got back feeling very bad indeed.

When I got up on the morning of the 13th of September the thermometer was no higher than 28°, although the sun was on the tent, and the hour was 6.30 A.M. We went as usual to the plain we had been hunting on the two preceding days. From the hill to the east we saw a herd coming up out of the shallow nala to the north. Thinking there might be some bucks in the herd, I ran down into the plain, and ensconced myself in a marmot burrow. My legs went down a long way into it, and I was able to sit with only my shoulders and head above the level of the plain. After I had been there some ten minutes or so, the shikāris signalled to me to come out. The gazelles were then in sight, but concluding that there were no males worth shooting, I got up and joined the men. My surmise was correct. The herd consisted only of females and small males. While I had been in the marmot burrow the men had sighted three bucks by themselves going towards the shallow nala. They were some distance up a hillside to the north-west of the plain, and we resolved to get down into the nala, and see if we could intercept them.

We had got to the edge of the ravine, when we saw some thirty gazelles in it looking up at us. They were a bit to my right, and the three males we wanted to interview were to my left, so to try and prevent the large herd frightening the latter, I ran quickly down into the nala to try and cut them off. As a natural consequence the herd raced to prevent my intercepting them,

and passed in front of me. I could have knocked over some of them with the greatest ease, but none were worth shooting. They swung round to my left, on to the plain, but must have been seen by the three we were after, for when we next saw our herd of bucks it was close to the sky-line, on a ridge far from the nala.

While we were watching them, much disgusted at the turn events had taken, we suddenly caught sight of a group of five, about half a mile away, feeding towards the northern end of the ravine we were standing in. The telescope showed all to be males. Directing the pony-men to stay where they were at the bottom of the nala, we moved up it, and after going half a mile or so, went up one of the side ravines leading down into it, in hopes of intercepting the herd at the top. I went ahead here on my elbows and knees, and in a few minutes saw the herd pass across me, but out of range. It had evidently been startled in some way, for it was going fast. I returned to the shikāris, and the three of us continued our way up the main nala at a jog-trot, which was very trying considering the elevation we were at. We had not gone a quarter of a mile when Abdulla dropped flat on his face with a sudden exclamation, and we did the same. Looking up I saw the five crossing the nala about 400 yards ahead of us. If we had been only 300 yards further on what a chance I should have had!

We lay still till the herd was well over, and then went on, turning up the hillside to the right in the direction it had taken. We sighted it in a few minutes going slowly up, and looking back constantly while so doing. We dropped when we came in sight, and lay still for

what seemed a long time, while the herd slowly went upwards. The hill was a long gentle rise, and it was about half an hour before the gazelles disappeared over the crest, and we were at liberty to go on. We went up towards where the game had been last seen, and crouched low as we got to the top of the rise. Before we reached it, however, the herd was again visible, not more than 150 or 170 yards off, and I dropped at once, but as some rising ground prevented me from getting a sufficient view I began crawling forward. I was, however, detected, and the lot bolted. Seeing it was useless to try and get any nearer I sat up, and the animals stopped to look at me. I dropped one buck in his tracks, and fired two shots at the others as they were bolting, but without effect. Stepping the distance to the fallen gazelle, which was stone dead when we reached him, I found it just 239 paces. The ground was nearly level. The animal was struck on the near hind-quarter, the bullet passing out with the usual bad wound in front of the off-hip.

When breakfast was over, one pony was sent back with the dead gazelle, and the two shikāris and I proceeded to hunt up the four that had escaped, or the three we had previously seen, whichever we might come across first. After going for a couple of miles along the crest in the direction taken by the four fugitives, we suddenly came in sight of the three lying on a hilltop, about a mile off. Making a detour, after leaving the ponies with the coolie, we cautiously went up towards the point where the herd had been seen. But, unfortunately for us, it was on the alert, and the instant that my head

LĀMĀS IN HANLÈ MONASTERY (p. 355).

became visible, and before I had time to fire, all three jumped up, and without stopping to look again, bolted down into the plain. Following a short distance we soon saw them grazing below. It was exasperating to see how well these little brutes knew that their safety lay in remaining in open ground. About a mile to the north of where the three were, we suddenly caught sight of the four bucks who formed the other herd we were in pursuit of. They were also placidly grazing in a perfectly unapproachable position.

The question then was, what was to be done? It was no use waiting, for, judging from previous experience, the herds might, and probably would, having been once frightened, remain on the plain till dark. The shikāris had no suggestions to offer. So I said that we had best try to drive them out of the plain, and then if they went to any spot where a stalk was possible, a stalk might be attempted.

In front of us, on the other side of the level ground, was a hill, the crest of which ran parallel to the length of the plain, and at right angles to us if we were to advance straight towards it from where we were. To our right front was a ravine, forming the northern end of the plain. To the left the plain stretched away for some miles, till it ended at the hills around our camp. We resolved to go straight down, openly, between the two herds, and try and drive the four into the ravine, and the three towards our camp. This proceeding was carried out as far as we were concerned. The herd of three grazed its way quietly southwards; the four went north-westwards, also quietly at first. But presently they

seemed to divine that we wanted to drive them into the ravine, for when they came near its edge they kept along it, instead of going downwards, and then turned up the hill in front of us. As soon as they had gone over the crest (they stayed for a long time on the crest itself, watching us apparently) we went up the hill, keeping to the left in hopes to cut them off. But we had only gone half-way up when we saw them debouch on the plain a long way to our left, and therefore once more in a position of absolute safety. Evidently they had started off at top speed the moment they were beyond the crest and out of our sight, knowing that in the nalas there they were in more or less danger. As a matter of fact, if they had gone slowly we should have intercepted them and got a shot, or if I had known their habits better, I should have rushed up as soon as they were out of sight, and met them galloping down. But the Kashmiri had seen nothing of this kind of shooting, and Giato was apparently incapable of drawing the necessary conclusions. The four shortly joined the three, and the combined herd began grazing again, once more absolutely indifferent to our presence on the hill-side above them. The question again arose what was to be done.

Looking south as we were then standing, there was a spur of a chain behind projecting into the plain, and it was suggested by Abdulla that I should go up this spur by a detour to the right, and that the remaining three should endeavour to urge the seven bucks towards me. Nobody having any better suggestion to make, this was agreed to, and I went off on a tramp

of a couple of miles to try and get to the spur. By the time I arrived there the drive had commenced; but the combined herd was no easier driven than the two separate groups had been. The herd of three went south along the plain, past the spur I was on, but far out of range, and the other four went up the ridge to the east, altogether out of the plain. I went down, accordingly, and joined the men, and they told me that the three had gone up a small tongue of the plain that led up behind a low hill, and might be found beyond it. I, accordingly, went up this hill as fast as my wind would allow, and on getting towards the top, instead of making at once to the right, where there was a pass leading down to the plain again, and where, if I had known these animals a little better, I should have made certain of their appearing, I went straight up over the crest, rifle in hand, looking in all directions. Suddenly I caught sight of the three standing on the pass, and about 200 yards away. I sat down and had a broadside shot at the last of the three, but made a mess of it and missed to his right. All three bolted straight for the plain, and in less than ten minutes the aggravating little beasts were in the middle of the open ground, grazing as if nothing whatever was the matter. This was about the most heart-breaking species of sport I had yet tried, and my sensations were the reverse of pleasant as I sat disconsolate on the hillside and looked at the antelope, now over a mile away.

It being quite hopeless to go any more after this herd, we turned our attention to the group of four, and got on the range to the east, up which it had gone. The ground towards the top got broken up into so many small

nalas and ridges, that I thought it quite impossible that such astute creatures, as these had proved themselves to be, would stay amongst them. So we did not get down and walk, as we ought to have done, but went along, with most reprehensible carelessness, on the ponies on which we had ridden up. Suddenly, as we came to the crest of a ridge, I saw the four antelope jump up about 60 yards down the other side, and bolt to the left. I was off my pony in a second, and having my rifle in my hands, sat down on the ground and drew a bead on the last of the four. Hoping they might stop to look back, I waited, and the next moment they did so. They were a long way off at the time, so putting up the 200 yards' leaf, and taking a full sight, I fired. "Hit, hit!" said the shikāri, as all went off at racing speed. The one at the tail of the four went for some 50 or 60 yards in a diagonal direction (the herd had been crossing my line of fire and going away from me at the same time), and then lay down. We ran up to him, and found him dying, with a bullet through the middle of the body.

I wondered he was able to go as far as he did, with the severe wound he was suffering from. His throat was cut in the orthodox way by the Kashmiri, and the body then packed on a pony and sent to camp in charge of Giato, while Abdulla and I went up the hill after the three now remaining. Before going, I stepped the distance from where I fired to where this last buck was found, and it proved just 417 paces. So, allowing for the distance he ran, he could hardly have been less than 300 yards off when hit. We followed the three for over an hour, but saw no signs of them again, and got back to camp about 4 P.M.

The horns of the first of the two gazelles shot that day measured just over $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and those of the second one just over $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches.[1] Having now got three fair specimens of the goa, I determined to strike camp next day and start for Leh.

Neither Abdulla nor I had ever been after goa before, and Giato did not seem to understand the sport; but for these facts we should have made a better bag, I think. The first day was wasted altogether in endeavouring to stalk large herds, none of which contained a shootable buck. I also refrained from firing at times when I had reasonable chances, fearing to frighten the animals too much. On the two subsequent days, for the same reason, I would not take long shots; and it was not till quite the end of the second day that I began to think I saw how goa ought to be pursued.

If I were to go after the Tibet gazelle again, I should, first of all, carefully avoid herds, and look only for small groups of males. If these were going up towards ground where there was some hope of getting within shot, I should try and make a circuit and intercept them. If they were not doing so, I should go straight towards them, and openly drive them out of the plain. Further, I should fire whenever there was the remotest possibility of hitting, whether the shot was a long one or not, knowing that a miss would not result, as it would in the case of *Ovis ammon*, in driving the game entirely out of the country.

I had more than once consulted with Abdulla as to the best route for returning to Leh. The ordinary way was to go back *via* the Tagalang Lā and Gya; but he said

[1] See illustration on p. 335.

that, as it was now late in the year, this would be a very cold route, and the Tagalang might be under snow. He recommended going back along the Indus, over which the usual cold-weather bridges would by now, he said, be built, and where there were no passes to cross. For these reasons, and wishing also to see new country, I agreed to his proposal.

CHAPTER XX

SEPTEMBER 14-21—KIONGMA CHUMIK TO LEH

Hanlè monastery—The Gompa interior—Prayer-wheels—Merit obtainable from them—Camp at Sango again—Thrown by pony—Nimu ford—Sentence on mountain—Chumathang—Hot springs—Kilmong—Aikeke—Gaik—Kyungyām—Troublesome ponies—Himmi—No bridge—Difficult climb—Chang and sattoo—Likcha—Bad bit of road—Eek—Shera—Ease in settling transport accounts—Himis monastery—Photographs of the rooms—Leh—Photographs in Leh—The Ladāk Pirāk—Dress of Ladāki women.

Clouds were hanging about, and the thermometer stood at 34° F. when I got up on the morning of the 14th of September, and packed up to start for Leh. We had breakfast, as before, at Hanlè under the monastery. Afterwards I took the opportunity to go up to that picturesque building, and was very civilly allowed by the Lamas to take some photographs. In particular, I photographed the three watch-dogs, which were kept chained up in one of the courtyards. They were black, thick-coated animals, about the size of Newfoundlands, but marked with tan, just like a Gordon setter. They are said—I do not know with what truth—never to be let loose.

The Gompa, or place of worship, was, like all

others I saw, dirty, and smelt of ghi, which was being burned as usual in big vessels of brass. There was no daylight except from the door and a draped skylight. All the hangings, though of the finest Chinese silk and richly embroidered, looked filthy. The roof was made of small logs about 2 feet long and 2 inches in diameter, supported on dirty wooden pillars. A row of long

WATCH-DOGS IN HANLÈ MONASTERY.

cushions at either side indicated where the Lamas sat during service. There was a big resonant drum and a pair of cymbals, as part of the sacred furniture. There were two altars, tawdry structures, decorated with tinsel and with lights burning before them. In front of the Gompa was a courtyard ornamented with long poles supporting coloured rags stamped with prayers. Every flutter of the rags is equivalent to a repetition of the

prayers upon them. Here I took a photograph of a group of the holy men themselves.[1]

The sides of this enclosure were studded with prayer-wheels. These were mostly small barrel-shaped boxes, revolving on the longer axis. A touch of the hand in passing set them going, and their weight kept them revolving for some little time. The ingenuity of the idea that lies at the bottom of these curious things is wonderful. I opened, with the consent of the Lamas, the top of one which was slightly cracked, and took out of it a circular piece of birch bark. This was 5 inches in diameter, and each side had been stamped (probably from a wooden block as their books are done), with five rings of printed matter. Each barrel was about 8 inches long, therefore each held over 7 inches in thickness of birch-bark circles, one on top of another. Now these are about as thick as ordinary paper, of which some sixty leaves will go to a quarter of an inch, say, to be on the safe side, 200 to an inch. Therefore there would be some 1400 bark circles in a barrel, or 2800 printed surfaces. On each surface the sacred sentence, "Om mani padmi om"[2] or some other prayer, is probably entered at least ten times. As a matter of fact, I believe it to be entered much oftener, but this may be taken as a minimum; then a single revolution of the barrel is equivalent to turning the prayer or the mystic sentence round, 10 × 2800, or 28,000 times. But a touch of the finger will revolve the barrel at least ten times, and a strong push probably thirty or forty times,

[1] See illustration on p. 345.

[2] The exact meaning of this sentence is not known, but the nearest translation is said to be, "Oh! the Jewel in the Lotus Flower!"

and there were some fifty or so of these prayer-wheels around the courtyard, and many of them much larger than those I have described. It will be readily seen, therefore, that if merit result from repeating the great sentence or a prayer a number of times, and if revolving it in a barrel is equivalent to repeating it, an enormous amount of merit could be accumulated in a very short time by a monk who chose to walk round that court-yard, touching each prayer-wheel with his finger as he passed.

Below the main monastery is a small Gompa with a tiny shrine, decorated, as the majority of these Ladāk shrines are, with flowers made, some of butter and some of tinsel. As usual, lights were burning on a small ledge, being cotton wicks immersed in ghi contained in small vessels shaped like goblets. Around the Gompa were poles ornamented with horns and yāks' tails, connected by cords on which hung the usual rags covered with prayers. There were several chortens[1] and mānis[2] close by.

About 1 P.M. I left, the laden ponies having gone on directly after breakfast. This time we kept to the left bank of the river, as we did not want to follow it to its mouth at Nowi, but to leave it some distance before reaching the Indus and make for Nimu. About 4 P.M. I met a coolie carrying the post which my wife had sent on from Tankse, and about half an hour before dusk we

[1] Small pagoda-like structures containing sacred images made of the ashes of Lamas mixed with clay.

[2] Walls, about 5 feet high and 6 to 10 feet thick, covered with loose flat stones, on which the mystic sentence or a prayer has been inscribed. Going round a māni once places to the credit of the traveller all the prayers upon it; hence a māni is always left on the right in passing.

THE SMALL GOMPA BELOW HANLÈ MONASTERY, WITH MĀNI AND THREE CHORTENS IN FOREGROUND.

camped for the night on the Sango plain, on the edge of the river, and at the mouth of the Sango nala.

Next morning (the 15th) when I got up the thermometer stood at 43° F., a great improvement on the temperature registered at Kiongma Chumik. It was snowing when we started, and we had snow two or three times during the day, but it was a fairly pleasant march, as the wind—the curse of Ladāk—was not strong, and the sun generally bright and warm. The pony I was riding threw me clean that morning in a most comical way. I was sitting quietly, reading a newspaper as the animal jogged along. I had stuffed the part I had finished with, into the hollow forming the pommel of the saddle, from which after a bit the paper worked loose and fell out. Instantly the animal swung round sharp, and I promptly rolled off. For the rest of that day the mere rustle of a paper frightened that pony so much that I had to be careful how I handled what I read.

The track leaves the Hanlè river below the low Sangpoehe Pass, which we crossed about noon. Not finding good water, we did not stop for breakfast till we reached the Indus about 2 P.M. After that meal, we went on down the river till we came to the ford opposite Nimu, where we had crossed with much trouble and delay on the 9th of August. Now, however, the water was much lower, and there was no difficulty in marching the ponies over. Then we went up a couple of miles to the Nimu village and camped there, as it was not worth while trying to go on further, the next camping-ground being rather far. We had done about 29 miles.

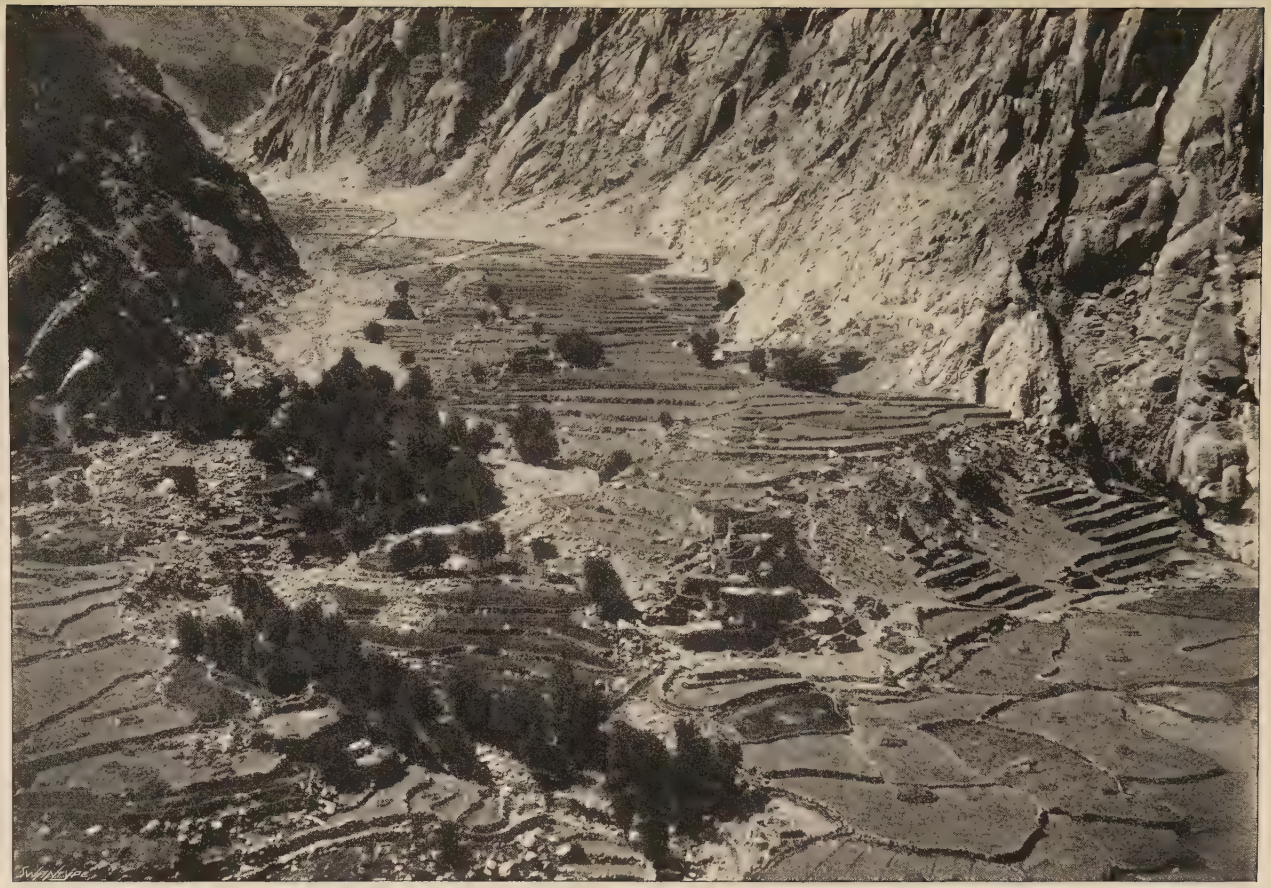
The monastery above the village is picturesquely

situated on some steep rocks. Between the village and the river was a chocolate-coloured slate mountain, and on this, in letters apparently many yards long, made of white stones, was the mystic sentence, "Om mani padmi om." The sentence must have been over a hundred yards long, judging from its appearance from our camp, from which it seemed to be over a mile away.

The morning of the 16th saw us marching down the Indus with fresh ponies. The colour of the river was now a greenish blue, and the quantity of water was greatly reduced. Very pretty the stream looked, usually some distance below the path, and flecked with white here and there where it foamed past a rock. We reached Mya about eleven, and the mouth of the Puga nala, down which we had come on the 8th of August, an hour after. Just beyond we found a fair-sized stream coming down from the hill above, and as there was nice grass and a lot of tamarisk, rose, and willow trees, we stopped for breakfast. The rose bushes were now in seed, the hips being a most brilliant scarlet, and wonderfully abundant, so that each tree shone out a regular blaze of colour, almost as it had done when in flower.

After this we marched on to Chumathang, a fine large village with extensive cultivation, on which all the corn had been cut. Here we arrived about 4.30 P.M. This was the place to change the Nimu ponies, but as only two fresh animals were available, we had to take on four of the old nags with us. The lambardar, however, gave us fresh men, and we went on.

Immediately after leaving Chumathang we passed



HIMMI VILLAGE ON THE INDUS SHOWING TERRACED CULTIVATION (pp. 50 and 365).

some curious hot springs. The water was just too warm for the hand, and gave out steam as it bubbled up. It came out of crevices in white rock of some kind, and little jets rose about 4 or 5 inches above the level of the basins it occupied. There were some two or three of these basins, and the hot water was at different degrees of ebullition. From the hillside above, also, small trickles of hot water came down. The people seem to make no use of these hot springs.

When it was getting dusk we reached a ford opposite the village of Kilmong, and as there was a little grass on our bank, and no likelihood of reaching a better place before it was pitch dark, I resolved to camp here. We had done 27 miles.

I sent a man over to get wood and arrange, if possible, for fresh ponies for the morning, and then pitched my tent by the moonlight. As it was too late for dinner to be cooked, I had a tin of hotch-potch soup heated, and dined on that, with scones, butter, and cheese.

On the morning of the 17th we were early afoot, the thermometer standing at 43° F. when I got up. The previous morning at Nimu it had been 42°. The Kilmong men changed some of the ponies, but not all.

Opposite the village of Aikeke, about 11 miles on, there are a few fields and one house. Here I stopped to breakfast, and had an enjoyable meal under a large tamarisk-tree by a small irrigation channel. The Kilmong men transferred the ponies to men of this village and went back.

The road most of this day was hard on the animals, there being a great deal of up and down and mostly over

granite. We passed about 4 P.M. the village of Gaik, most curiously situated on a flat-topped shoulder of the mountain, with very precipitous sides and high above the road.

About dusk we arrived opposite the opening of the Tiri gorge, but seeing from the map that the village of Kyungyām was only some 2 or 3 miles further on, I would not stop, though grass and wood were available. I went on ahead, and reached Kyungyām about an hour or so after dark, and sent my pony-man up to the houses to get wood, against the arrival of the baggage ponies. It was brilliant moonlight, so it was not difficult to select places for the tents, or to pitch them when they arrived, which they did about half an hour after me. Here I got my mail from Leh, sent out by my wife on the 15th. Owing to the difficulties of the road, which involved a good deal of ascent and descent, we had only done 24 miles.

We had a regular scene with some new ponies we were given next morning. The villagers vowed they could only supply two fresh ponies. One of these, when loaded and started, promptly kicked his load off. Luckily it consisted of the two tents, and no harm was done. The pony brought for Abdulla would not let him go near it, so it was taken away. Then we put a saddle on the pony which had kicked off its load, and one of the men rode it about; but as soon as the shikāri got on its back, it made for its stable, and refused to go along the path it was wanted for. So I put on a rope-twitch, and after some violence the animal got quiet. A villager rode it out of the village, when the shikāri got up and it gave no further trouble.

After about 5 miles we arrived opposite the large village of Himmi. Here there ought to have been a bridge which would have enabled us to avoid a very steep bit of ascent, but though the wood was lying ready, no bridge had been built by the Himmi people. So we had to leave the ponies here till the men could return to them, and the drivers themselves took up the loads.

The track at this point led up, by what were practically a series of granite steps, over a shoulder of the mountain about 500 feet high, the river end of the rock being absolutely precipitous. The going at the top was slippery, so the coolies went with their feet bare. From here I took a photograph of Himmi village, which affords a good example of the terraced cultivation of these arid tracts. After going along at an elevation of about 500 feet, for some distance amongst granite boulders, where a slip meant a clean drop into the Indus below, the track descended to a strip of cultivation, which we followed till we came to a bridge, by which we crossed to the left bank of the river. But for finding this bridge, we should have had another and much higher mass of granite rocks to get over further on.

The lambardar of Himmi met us near the bridge with some coolies, to take my things from the pony-men, whom he regaled with chang (a kind of barley-beer, the national drink in Ladāk) and sattoo. The sattoo, or barley-meal, was put into the small wooden saucer which every Ladāki carries, and the chang poured on it. The mixture was stirred up by the finger into a thick gruel, and then gulped down. As far as I could make

out, the headman had seen us from his village, and had brought coolies instead of ponies, as the latter, he said, were not procurable. We then went along the left bank for a short distance, when we returned to the right by another bridge, opposite to which was a pretty grove. The trees were, as in most of these Ladāk groves, planted in regular rows, and standing, when I saw them, deep in flowering lucerne.[1]

In this pleasant spot I sat down and had my breakfast, while I sent the lambardar to try and get two ponies. After considerable delay he produced a couple, one of which was lame, and was returned. He said that he had sent to another village also, and that we should get more ponies a little further on. So we went on, and about two miles beyond, met two ponies being brought for us. At the same point we overtook the coolies and transferred some of the loads to one of these animals, the shikāri taking the other. Close to the place where this change was made, I took a photograph of some magnificent granite crags[2] overlooking the Indus.

About 4 P.M., after a lot of very bad going, entirely over granite, we arrived at Likcha, with our three ponies and some seven or eight men. The lambardar said the next bit of the road was too severe for laden ponies, and gave us men to carry the loads. Unladen ponies, he admitted, could go, and I said I required the ponies, so as to be able to get along fast when the bad bit was passed. He protested he could get no ponies, though there must have been many in so very large a village as

[1] Most of these artificial groves in Lādak are sown with lucerne, to provide grazing for the ponies.

[2] See illustration on p. 423.

HIMIS MONASTERY, FROM ROCKS ABOVE THE CAMPING GROUND (p. 371).

this. So I told the shikāri to wait behind and bring on what animals he could get, while I went ahead with the loads and two of the beasts we had. The lambardar thereupon disappeared, and when the shikāri caught me up again, he said that the man had hidden himself, and that consequently no fresh animals had been obtained.

The path after leaving Likcha turned up a gorge between two granite hills, and then went zigzagging up the one to the west, which must have been some 1500 feet above the level of the river. It was about the worst bit of track I have ever seen ponies climb, and was pretty severe on all of us. The descent on the other side was equally steep, and almost as trying, and I was astonished to see the ponies do it. When we got down we found ourselves near the village of Eek (or Ikpadok, as it is marked on the map), and as it was then fast getting dusk, I resolved to camp here for the night, though the actual distance we had come in the day was only 15 miles.

The delays, however, owing to the character of the track, had been very great, and I saw I should probably have come faster if I had returned by Gya and the Tagalang Lā. Most of the trouble was caused by the absence of a bridge at the upper end of Himmi, of one below Likcha, and of a third above Eek. I was informed that the villagers regularly construct these bridges every year when the water falls, but the work had not been done at the time I passed, and I suffered in consequence.

As next morning it was clear that I could not get into Leh that day, I resolved to go to the celebrated Himis Monastery for the night, to see the place and take

some photographs. My wife had visited it with the rest of the European community at Leh, on the 20th of June, when the acting of the annual Miracle Play began. We started from Eek about 7.30 A.M. with the same three ponies and the same seven or eight coolies, and about 9 o'clock reached Shera, where we obtained

CHORTEN SHRINE IN THE PRINCIPAL GOMPA OF HIMIS MONASTERY (p. 372).

six fresh ponies, and I paid for the journey from Kyungyām.

Although I had had different lots of men, and sometimes ponies only, and sometimes both ponies and men, I had no trouble with the accounts, as the distance was counted as two paraos or stages, and I paid as if I had had six ponies the whole time. The villagers apparently

trust each other implicitly in these matters, and arrange amongst themselves without any difficulty the proper payments to each. I handed over Rs.6, at 8 annas per parao for each pony, to one of the men from Likcha, and was assured that every one who had worked or given a pony would receive his proper share. If some system like this were not in operation, a traveller would be

Images in a Gompa in Himis Monastery (p. 372).

detained an intolerable time settling up accounts whenever there was anything complicated to arrange.

We reached the great Monastery of Himis a little before dusk, and my tent was pitched on a small patch of level ground near the buildings. We had covered about 20 miles. I took a photograph of the extensive structure [1] from this spot, just as it was getting dark, and then did

[1] See illustration on p. 367.

the gateway[1] and gallery[2] in the courtyard where the famous Miracle Play annually takes place.

Next morning (the 25th), after starting my things off, I went again to the Monastery, and saw the two principal Gompas, apartments corresponding to a certain extent with our churches or chapels. The more important of these differed from the usual Gompa of a Lāmasery, in that the main shrine, instead of being an image of Buddha, or of one of the gods of the Hindu Pantheon, was a huge chorten-shaped structure,[3] ornamented with large knobs of coloured stones. With the consent of the Lamas who exhibited the rooms I took a photograph of each. Above the second Gompa[4] is a room with a low roof, full of images[5] of various sizes, before most of which lights were burning. In one of the passages downstairs I noticed a large prayer-wheel being turned by a small stream of water. It was the first time I had seen water-power used in this way. On leaving the Monastery I photographed a chorten near it with a demon's face,[6] and then marched on to Shushot, where I had my breakfast, getting into Leh (some 20 miles from Himis), about 4 P.M.

There I found my wife at the dak bungalow, as the weather was now cold enough to render a fire pleasant at night, and this could not be had in our tent.

The whole of the 21st I spent on correspondence and accounts, and in making arrangements for going out after burhel and uryal the next day. The Ladāk shikāri,

[1] See illustration on p. 385.
[2] See illustration on p. 393.
[3] See illustration on p. 370.
[4] See illustration on p. 377.
[5] See illustration on preceding page.
[6] See illustration on p. 396.

Rupsang, who had come with my wife to Leh, after leaving her there, had gone to the Rumbok nala, and seen four good uryal (shāpu), he said. These he proposed I should go after, and I settled to do so on the 22nd.

That morning, accordingly, I sent my things on, and then photographed the Leh Bazaar[1] and a group of Yarkand traders[2] I found there. Our milk-woman also, a Ladāki lady, whose head was adorned with a specially good pirāk (a head ornament peculiar to the women of these parts), was also induced to stand before the camera.

Ladāki women, though very ugly, have bright faces and pleasant manners. Their dress is picturesque and quaint. On the head is worn a curious thing called a "pirāk," consisting of a broad piece of red cloth tapering to a point over the forehead, and hanging down the back. On this are fastened, in considerable numbers, uncut turquoises, cornelians set in silver, and sometimes silver brooches. Attached to the pirāk and hanging over the ears, to protect them probably from the cold, are oblong pieces of black lambskin, which give a very grotesque appearance to the face. As the wealth of a Ladāki woman varies directly with the size of her pirāk, and the number of stones it displays, the value of the dower which will accompany a girl can be readily ascertained. A good pirāk is sometimes over 3 feet long and 9 inches wide, and is sometimes worth more than Rs.400 (about £25). It is an important heirloom, handed down from mother to daughter. Round her neck a Ladāki lady puts silver chains and strings of uncut stones, mostly

[1] See illustration on p. 386.

[2] See illustration on p. 401.

either turquoise or varieties of quartz. On her wrists there are usually bracelets of thick white shell, which look at a distance like linen cuffs. The hair is plaited into numerous thin strands, which are lengthened by

FRONT VIEW OF LADĀKI WOMAN IN ORDINARY COSTUME.

BACK VIEW OF LADĀKI WOMAN IN ORDINARY COSTUME.

the addition of yāk's hair, and amongst these silver ornaments are hung. Over her shoulders she carries a square-shaped mantle, generally of red cloth lined with goatskin, the hair of which forms a deep fringe all round. The petticoat is of rough brown homespun, like a

blanket, woven, as is customary with tribes of nomadic origin, in narrow strips about a foot wide. The narrow strips were originally necessitated by the small looms, which the early wandering habits of the race required, and it was curious to see, amongst a people who were no longer nomads, traces of a custom not arising out of their existing habits, but surviving solely as a relic of the past.[1] The strips, which are sometimes varied by lines of red and blue, are joined together to form the skirt. My wife tried to get some of this cloth, but found it was not procurable in the bazaar. It appears that when a Ladāki lady requires a petticoat she sits down and weaves the material she wants. On her feet she wears thick cloth boots with turned-up toes, and coming half-way up the leg. These boots are generally ornamented with scarlet embroidery, but give the feet a singularly large and awkward appearance.

[1] The Bhutias, who annually visit the English territory on their borders, carry small looms and always make their blankets in narrow strips.

CHAPTER XXI

SEPTEMBER 22-28—LEH TO RUMBOK

The Rumkok nala—Urucha—Hospitality at Zinchan—Four uryal—Two cartridges burst—One uryal leaves herd—Bad ground occupied by uryal—Blank days—Burhel seen on 26th—Easy shot missed—Head of uryal hit on 23rd brought in—Herd of seventeen burhel seen—Risky stalk—First burhel—Tarkum sub-nala.

After breakfast on the 22nd of September I started on a pony, accompanied by a boy to show me the way and to bring the animal back. The Indus being low we forded it below Pitak, and I overtook the baggage ponies about half an hour before dusk, as they were going up the pathway to Urucha, the village situated furthest up the Rumbok nala, and just under the Kunda Lā, which leads at a height of 16,211 feet into the Zāskār district.

Passing the village of Zinchan, a woman came forward with a brass vessel full of milk, and hospitably offered me a drink, but the bowl and the figure that presented it were too dirty, and I had to decline. She was accompanied by a girl carrying a jug of chang and some sattoo, which were given to and apparently much appreciated by my guide.

SHRINE IN SECOND GOMPA IN HIMIS MONASTERY (p. 372).

We camped on grass by an irrigation channel above the village, having covered about 17 miles.

Shortly after daylight on the 23rd we were up, the thermometer standing in my tent at 29° when I rose. In about an hour we started up the nala, and went over the hills to the south. About nine o'clock we saw the four uryal —all rams, and three of them good ones—at the bottom of a hollow between two small hills of slate *débris*. The ridge we were on ran down to where it seemed likely I could get near enough for a shot, so, keeping out of sight as we descended, we arrived without much trouble just below the spot from which I thought I could fire.

After tying up the loose stock of the rifle, and filling up the magazine, I put an 11th cartridge into the breech, and inadvertently used for this one with an unslit bullet, that is, not a Jeffery's bullet, but one with the top cut off and no slits at the side. I had taken in my pocket a few cartridges with bullets like these, not having very many of the other kind. As I think it turned out, the substitution of this cartridge for one with a Jeffery's bullet was most unfortunate. Having got the rifle ready I crept cautiously up to the edge of the ridge, and on peering over between two stones found that the four animals were lying down. The one with the best horns lay with his head in my direction, three-quarter broadside on, and about 120 yards off, as far as I could judge, so sitting up I leant my elbows on my knees, and aiming at the ground in front of his shoulder, so as to make sure of not going too high, let fly.

I saw a splash of slate dust just over the beast's back, and concluded I had fired high notwithstanding all

my care. The four animals jumped up, and running towards me, disappeared for a moment under the curve of the hill. I ran downwards, slipping in a cartridge from the magazine, and a moment after saw their heads, they seeing me at the same instant. They at once bolted, and I fired at one of the big rams as they got to the bottom. The peculiar sound, and the feeling of gas blown into my face, told me that the base of the cartridge had been blown out, as had occurred when I fired at the burhel on the 31st of July, and opening the breech I found that this was indeed so. I hastily pulled out my knife, and fumbling with the champagne opener, managed to pull out the broken shell, and to slip another cartridge in. Closing the breech I aimed again at one of the flying herd, which was then going up the opposite hill, after having galloped across the hollow in which it had been lying. Again the peculiar sound told me that a second cartridge had burst, and of course there was no knowing where the bullet had gone. Thoroughly sickened by my ill luck, I shook out the broken shell from the breech, and slipping in another cartridge, fired once more. The herd was then climbing some rocks towards the crest of a ridge parallel to the one I was on, and before they went over the edge I managed to get in a couple more shots at the big ram. Then the herd disappeared, and I sat where I was—speechless with vexation.

Beyond the ridge over which the rams had gone was a valley, and on the far side of this rose a high hill capped with snow. I was blaming myself for my bad first shot, and the maker of the cartridges for the two which burst, when I suddenly saw the rams as specks

near the snow-line on the distant hill, and perceived that there were only three. Where had the fourth gone?

He must, I then thought, have been hit, most probably by the first shot, as the subsequent cartridges which did not go wrong were fired very hurriedly and at long ranges, when the animals were running, and after I had been more or less demoralised by the failure of the two which had burst. Then I remembered that the first bullet used had not been slit, and I concluded that if it had reached its mark it would almost certainly have gone straight through, making a clean hole, and the splash in the slate dust seen over the uryal's back would have occurred just the same whether the bullet had gone through or over. I had never seen one of a herd separate from the rest unless it was hit, and I felt inclined to think, for the reasons given above, that the first bullet had gone true. We crossed over to the ridge where the four had last been seen together, and searched for blood, but could find none, which confirmed me in my opinion that if the uryal had been hit at all, the first shot and not any of the others had probably taken effect. For I was using the slit bullet when feeding from the magazine, and if any of these had reached its mark there would most probably have been blood somewhere on the track.

Not finding any, we decided to go after the three, but in order to give them time to settle down, if so disposed, we first had breakfast. We then went on, but though we covered a good deal of the awful ground on which these sheep live, we never came up with them, and saw no signs of the wounded one either.

I call the ground awful on account of the great labour involved in traversing it. It consists almost entirely of broken slate, sometimes as finely comminuted as sand, and sometimes in small pieces like those seen below the workings of a slate quarry. Sometimes the slate *débris* is many feet deep, and sometimes it lies as a thin layer on hard clay, but whether the *débris* be deep or shallow, it always lies at a very steep angle, exactly as it has slipped down the hillside from above. The moment the foot comes down on it the sportsman sinks up to his ankle if it be deep, sliding at the same time some distance down the hill; or if it be shallow, he slides downwards over the hard clay and frequently falls. On the deep stuff it is easy enough to go downwards, but laborious to keep on one level, and very hard work to ascend. On the shallow it is next door to impossible to move at all, and almost the only way in which progress can be made is to put the feet on such bare patches as can be found here and there, from which the slate has altogether slipped down.

Nearly the whole time I was after burhel and uryal I was on ground of this kind. Burhel sometimes get amongst granite rocks and sand, where the difficult ground I have described occurs only in patches, but uryal apparently never leave this slate shale, and the labour of stalking them is severer than anything I have ever done in pursuit of other game.

We got back to camp an hour before dusk, very tired, and very much disheartened. That evening I offered a reward for the uryal's head, and arranged to send a man

GATEWAY OF PRINCIPAL GOMPA IN HIMIS MONASTERY (p. 372).

next morning to see if the kites would act as guides to the animal's body.

The thermometer was at 28° when I got up on the 24th. The day was a blank, spent entirely in searching for burhel and uryal over the terrible ground I have attempted to describe. We saw only a few female burhel, though we went up the Kunda Lā, and swung round then to the north along the crests of the hills. We saw three tawny wolves, and I fired at one, but missed. The villagers told me that these beasts had been very numerous lately, and had done a lot of damage amongst their flocks, as well as in driving away game. The cold that day was considerable. I was nearly frozen trying to have breakfast on a high ridge, even though I chose a spot sheltered from the wind and got some sun. There was not much wind luckily, but what there was, was bitingly cold.

The 25th was equally blank. We went south-east over the hills, having left directions with the pony-men to move the camp to the village of Rumbok, which was situated in a side nala a few miles lower down than Urucha.

We worked round a number of small ravines, which open fan-shaped into the main nala, and were consequently going up and down the whole time over the usual slate *débris*. On the mountain-tops the wind was very cold, though luckily not strong. Whenever I took my hands out of my fur gloves—as, for instance, when taking a photograph—they quickly became almost useless from cold. At one point we looked down into the Stok nala, and saw Leh plainly a dozen miles away. After

working hard all day without seeing anything, we dropped down a side nala to the Rumbok village, and there found our camp.

I did not get up very early on the morning of the 26th, owing to the cold, but waited till the sun was well up and shining into the valley. We then walked up

LEH BAZAAR (p. 373).

nearly to its end and turned north up the hill. Going rather incautiously over the crest, we were seen by four burhel rams, which promptly made off up some high crags. On perceiving them we lay down, and watched till they disappeared over the top. Then going a little further up the crest we went after them, seeing two more rams on the way, but these were out of sight almost at once.

We reached the top of the slate crags near where the four burhel had gone, after a very severe climb, partly over slate rocks and partly over *débris*. No signs of

the herd were visible. We were then looking down into a deep nala, the top of which lay to our right and consisted of a jagged mass of slate rocks forming a semicircular ridge. We decided on working round this to the opposite side, and then going along its crest for some distance before crossing the nala back to camp.

So we set off, travelling almost entirely on broken slate, more or less comminuted, and feeling half frozen by the bitter wind. After a wearisome climb, we got to the middle of the semicircle, and finding a spot with a certain amount of shelter, we sat down and had breakfast. The tiffin coolie with us had collected droppings as he came along, and of these the fire was made. But there was not much shelter from the wind, and I was almost frozen at breakfast.

Working on round we got about to the middle of the opposite ridge, when we saw two small crests running down into the nala. Along one of these we sent the tiffin coolie, telling him to call to us if he saw any burhel. Along the other we proposed to go ourselves. Just as we reached the point where it left the main ridge, we heard the coolie call to us and utter the magic word "nāpu." So we went back to him, and some distance beyond where he was standing he showed us three burhel lying down.

These animals are so exactly the colour of the slate *débris* amongst which they lie, that when motionless it is exceedingly hard to make them out. I was several minutes staring at the spot they were on before I could see them, and even Abdulla, with his keen eyesight, said nāpu were the hardest animals to detect that

he knew of. The strong wind was blowing from them to us, and that was how the coolie's call to us had not been heard by the animals. Two had fair heads and the third was small. I made my way down to a rock, which was about 120 yards or so from them, as well as I could estimate, and resting the rifle on the rock aimed at the largest. But the rock was a high one, and I had to stand upright behind it without being able to rest against it, a most unsatisfactory position with such a strong wind as was then blowing. Finding I could not get the rifle steady, I ought to have sought for some other rest, but instead I thought I would chance it, and accordingly let drive, and—missed!

The rams jumped up and ran forward a few steps towards the left, not knowing, in the least, where the shot had come from. I hastily fired again, and again missed. The three thereupon ran towards where I was, and as they were disappearing behind a rock below, and when about 60 yards off, I once more fired and missed. I ran downwards to try and see them again, but they had passed away to my right, and when I saw them next they were about 300 yards off and going hard. I had a last despairing shot at them as they went round a corner, and then lost sight of them.

I cannot describe my feelings at having missed the excellent chance I had had. It was about as bad a piece of shooting as I had ever done. I don't know whether the shaky stock put me off, or what the cause was, but the shooting could not have been more execrable. We then descended into the nala, climbed the ridge that separated us from Rumbok, and dropped down to our

camp, my frame of mind being anything but enviable. I was extremely anxious to start for Srinagar, and I only wanted a couple of fair specimens of burhel and uryal to complete my bag. Here I had had a capital opportunity of getting the former, and had missed it shamefully, and I was naturally horribly disgusted with myself.

One bit of luck, however, occurred that day. One of the Rumbok shepherds had found the remains of the uryal, which I believed I had hit on the 23rd, and had brought in the head. This proved on measurement to be a fine specimen, just over $34\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and was evidently that of the large ram I had fired at, as he was the best of the four I saw. Apparently then the first bullet had hit him, but being solid, had not expanded properly. The body had been eaten by wolves, and of course the head skin was lost.

On the 27th we went back the way we had come down on the 26th, and dropped into the nala of the preceding day, where we had crossed it after my unsuccessful shots. Going up a subsidiary ravine some distance, we stopped half-way to have breakfast, as fuel and water were procurable, and the spot was sheltered from wind.

After this we went up to the top of the northern ridge, and suddenly, as we were going round on to the other slope, became aware of a herd of seventeen burhel with some fair rams. We instantly sat down, and as the position was such that the herd could see us if we moved, we remained still, hoping it would go into some place which would allow of a stalk.

It was then about noon, and we had to sit there till about 3 P.M., as the sheep kept, some lying down and

some moving about, just opposite to us on the other side of the nala. At last they went downwards to the right, and then grazed slowly a little way up another hill, but still in full view of us all the time.

There was a small ridge between us and the herd, and it was clear that if we could in any way get down into the hollow below it, we should be fairly safe, and might then cast about to get within range. It was a risky proceeding trying to get down, for the hillside was all fine slate shale, which was bound to rise in fine dust in the wind, as soon as we began to move, and there was great danger that this would attract the attention of the burhel. However something had to be risked, as the sheep showed no signs of moving out of sight, and so we began to slide.

There was a strong wind blowing up the hillside, and the dust rose as we had anticipated. With me were the two shikāris and one of the coolies, and we all lay almost flat against the hillside, and slid down through the shale, moving very gradually, so as to raise as little dust as might be. The whole time we carefully watched the sheep, and the moment any one of them raised his head from feeding, we stopped moving and lay like logs.

By this means we managed to get sufficiently low to put the small ridge between us and them, and then proceeded up to the rocks at its top, to see if we could get within range. By the time we had arrived there, we found that the whole herd had lain down, as the slope it was on was in sunshine and presumably warm. Some had gone to sleep, and some were evidently going off fast, nodding their heads. The best ram was lying

lowest of all, and therefore nearest to us, but the distance was at least 300 yards, and I thought it too far to risk a shot, which might only have the effect of frightening everything away. Apparently there was nothing to do but wait, for there was no means of getting any nearer.

The rocks we were behind sloped downwards in ridges a short way towards the hollow below the burhel, and Rupsang proposed we should go as far as we could without being observed, and see if we could get a shot from the bottom. We accordingly did so, but the change was unsatisfactory, for in some way the sheep appeared to get our wind, or at least to have some inkling of danger. They presently got up, and began looking suspiciously in our direction, and one or two of them gave a whistle. But they were evidently not sure, for they did not move off, but after standing motionless for a little, began to descend.

The question then was, whether, when they had got to the bottom, they would move east or west. If they did the former they would be going up the small nala below us, and I might be able to go further down and then follow them. If they went west, they would come within range of where I was. Of course they selected the safer method, and having got to the bottom, began grazing slowly up the nala to the east.

Rupsang then slid downwards out of sight of the burhel, and I went after him. A small rise screened us from the game, which we followed to the right, until I came in sight at about 100 yards or a little over. When this occurred I found that two burhel—not very good ones—were looking at me, but evidently, as only my head

was visible, uncertain as to what I was. I tried to creep nearer so as to catch sight of a good ram, of which there were two or three in the herd, but saw that if I waited longer the lot would be off. I was in a very uncomfortable position on the shale of the hillside, and pumped with trying to get up unobserved on the difficult ground these creatures inhabit. So I was not surprised when, on taking aim at the best of those I could see, and firing, the bullet went over his back. The whole herd turned and went off westwards, passing under the spot I was on. I stood up and fired rapidly at the leader, who appeared to be a fair-sized ram. The sun had gone behind one of the hills by this time, and the light was a little uncertain, and I missed.

Then, as the leader disappeared round a rock, I aimed at another, now about 250 yards off, and had the satisfaction to see him roll over. He picked himself up, however, and began moving slowly on after the herd, which had by this time gone out of sight. We ran ahead and got below him, and he showed himself on a rock above us, standing still and looking down. I climbed up nearer, the burhel moving off as I did so, and we saw him next about 25 yards off, when a bullet through the body sent him down the hill. When we got up to him we found that the first bullet had caught him just under the tail, and gone up into the body, the last which had dropped him, having gone through from side to side. His head was then cut off, and body cleaned, and the meat having been put on the back of the coolie, we started down the nala.

When leaving Rumbok that morning we had given

GALLERY IN HIMIS MONASTERY ROUND COURTYARD IN WHICH ANNUAL MIRACLE-PLAY IS REPRESENTED (p. 372)

instructions that the camp was to be taken to the mouth of this nala, as we knew we should be going down it by evening, and thought it would be better for us to find the tents there, than to have to climb back over the hill to the village. There was hardly any path, and it soon became pitch dark, and floundering over the broken rocks was anything but pleasant work, especially as the straps of one of my chaplis gave way, and I had much trouble in keeping it on my foot. We reached the mouth of the ravine, where it joins the main Rumbok nala, about an hour after dark, and found the two tents pitched and a couple of fires lighted. The head we had got measured only 18½ inches—a poor specimen.

The thermometer in my tent was at 32° on the morning of the 28th when I got up, and of course it was freezing hard outside. After sending the uryal head into Leh, and half the burhel to my wife, by the post-coolie who had arrived the previous evening, we went up the Tarkum sub-nala. I rode as far as the pony could go, and then sent him back to Zinchan, the village a couple of miles below our last camp, where we proposed to return in the evening, and to which place we had ordered the tents to be taken.

All day we worked over broken rocks and slate shale in typical burhel country, but saw only a few females and small rams. The sun was bright, but the wind was bitterly cold. We turned up the northern side of the nala, as Zinchan lay in that direction, and reached our camp about 4 P.M.

The question then arose, what was to be done next day? We had now gone over most of the burhel ground

in the Rumbok nala, and as I had not yet got a decent specimen, and had seen some near the Rumbok village, I resolved to go back there. Rupsang suggested we

CHORTEN WITH DEMON FACE, BELOW HIMIS (p. 372).

should try the south side of the Tarkum sub-nala the next day, and then drop down into Rumbok village, to which place the camp could in the meantime be sent, and as this was the only bit not searched, I agreed.

CHAPTER XXII

SEPTEMBER 29 TO OCTOBER 17—RUMBOK TO SRINAGAR

Tarkum sub-nala—Second and third burhel—Zinchan—Farka—Wind and snow—The three uryal—Failure of stalk—The same uryal on the 2nd—One wounded—Pursued all day on 3rd, but in vain—Hard day—Nimu—Rupsang paid off—Prayer-wheel at Bāzgo—Fotu Lā—Zogi Lā—Rest-houses at Machaloi and Bāltāl—Scenery of the Sind valley—Autumn colours—Srinagar.

On the morning of the 29th of September, after directing the camp to be taken to Rumbok, we started up the same way as on the previous day, but after an hour's travelling turned up the ridge to the south. This was not a very severe slope, and had grass on it, so the pony was able to follow us. We reached the top about eleven, and sat down in a sunny spot sheltered from wind to have breakfast. When this was over, we climbed some high rocks to our right, and examined the valley below. A herd of burhel was quickly made out, but the one male in it did not seem to me shootable, and I would not stalk him. Just as we were on the point of turning away, the Kashmiri caught sight of three others coming down a small watercourse towards the herd first detected. On examination with the glasses these were seen to be fit to go after.

The valley into which the three were descending was divided into two immediately below us, by a ridge of rocks which began close to where we were, and ended abruptly in some high precipitous crags. The herd first seen was below the end of this ridge, while the three animals subsequently noticed were descending into the western half into which the upper part of the valley was thus divided. We at once went down into the eastern half, keeping the crest between us and the shootable burhel, and being careful not to come within sight of the first herd. This was easy, as the ground was uneven. Then cautiously ascending the ridge, I peered over, and saw the three burhel we were after slowly coming up the slight hollow they were in.

Lying down flat, I aimed at the biggest as he walked up, broadside on, about 100 yards off, and fired. Whether the bullet hit him or missed I do not know, but all three ran up the ridge we were on, and got on the top of the precipitous crags at its end. They stood with their backs to us, looking down the gorge, and evidently without any idea of where the bullet had come from. I fired again at the largest ram, and they all bolted to the right. I got two more shots as the big one disappeared round some rocks, and then fired a couple at one of the others which was behind. He dropped in his tracks to the second bullet, and I went after the big ram, soon coming in sight of him on some rocks above me. The whole of his left side was a mass of blood, and he was evidently done for. The next moment he fell and rolled down the hillside.

The third, which had been standing below, now

bolted, and I ought to have fired at him at once, but thinking he would stop before disappearing, I reserved my fire. He, however, did not stop, but went round a rock and out of sight very fast.

A nāpu head, manifestly over 20 inches, had now been got, and as it was possible to get burhel elsewhere, this sheep not being peculiar to Kashmir, I decided to clear out of the nala. It was then about 2 P.M., and as there was time to stop the camp from being pitched at Rumbok, I settled to return to Zinchan at once, and sent off the pony-man to Rumbok, to bring back the tents to where they had been in the morning.

On examining the smaller burhel we found that he had been hit on the saddle, and the bullet going up into his body, had killed him on the spot. His horns only measured $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches. I should not have fired at him if I had known he was so small. The larger ram was riddled with bullets, and his skin was quite useless. One bullet had hit him on the horn, and split a good deal of the end of it, the hole of exit being surrounded by bad splinters. The length was just over 22 inches. The tiffin coolie took up one burhel, Rupsang the two heads, Abdulla the camera, and I the rifle, and we went down the gorge and thence into the Tarkum nala, and so down to Zinchan. The camp turned up shortly after we got in, and everything was quickly put straight.

I had now got burhel and uryal horns, and was fairly content. But for the uryal head there was no head-skin, and I resolved to try and get one if possible before going away. I should have been glad, too,

of another pair of uryal horns. But as the season was getting late, and there was danger of snow on the Zogi Lā, I was anxious to be off as soon as possible.

On the 30th accordingly I sent the camp, under Rupsang's advice, to Farka, a small village just opposite Pitak, while we ourselves left the Rumbok nala, and went round the foot of the slate hills that bound the Indus valley in that neighbourhood. Going up a nala between two of these hills, we saw three uryal rams, but as it was late when we saw them, and they were some distance up the hill, we determined to defer stalking till the following day.

For some unknown reason, wounds, I found, could not easily be cured in the air of Ladāk. Generally my experience is that a cut closes at once, and heals completely in a very short time, but in Ladāk cuts and scratches kept open for weeks. To give an instance, I may mention that I cut my thumb accidentally on the 25th of July, and happening to touch the place when unpacking at Farka the evening we got there, the wound began to bleed afresh. It did not finally heal up till we reached Srinagar.

The first of October involved some of the hardest work I have ever gone through after game. The morning was cloudy, and a strong cold wind was blowing up the valley, as we crossed the stony plain that separates Farka from the ridges we were going to search for uryal. When we began ascending the hill on which the three rams had been seen the day before, we got into a cloud, and fine snow came on, driven against us by the bitter wind. The hill consisted of slate as usual, most

YARKAND TRADERS IN THE BAZAAR AT LEH (p. 373).

of it broken up very fine on the surface, and our feet sank deep into it, and slid back at every step as we worked our way on. At intervals the cloud would blow over, and a little sunlight struggle through for a few minutes, only to be succeeded by another cloud and more snow.

Occasionally, when the atmosphere was opaque with snow, and there was, therefore, no chance of seeing anything, we sat down on the lee side of a rock and tried to get shelter. By about eleven o'clock we reached the top, having met nothing but a herd of some dozen or so uryal females and small males, who got our wind and promptly bolted. While searching from the top the opposite nala—the one we had gone up the previous day—Rupsang detected a ram where we had seen the three. As he was some distance down the hillside we resolved to have breakfast first, and to go after him later. So a fire was lighted under a rock, and my breakfast warmed up. While at it the snow came down heavily. I was nearly frozen by the time we started for the stalk, and most unwillingly faced the cold wind beyond the shelter of the rock under which I had been sitting.

The hillside, all the way to where the ram was seen, was fine slate shale, deep in some places, and thinly sprinkled over hard clay in others. Close to where the ram lay a long ridge of slate rocks stood up out of the shale, and the best plan of attack evidently was to go down behind this ridge, and then get up to the top of it for the shot. So we set off to carry out this plan. When we began to get near the animal great care had to be exercised, as the loose slates kept slipping and

making a noise which sounded most painfully loud. But it was practically impossible to get down without moving the stones, and some of them rolled or slid down a long distance, and I felt sure we should be heard. It was probable, we thought, that the uryal we had seen was one of the three noticed the previous day, and that the other two were near, though not in view from the top. This conjecture proved to be correct, for when we had reached the place from which we had hoped for a shot, and I had gone forward alone to the edge of the ridge, none were visible where the single one had been seen, but three were detected going up the hill hurriedly, and far out of shot.

Evidently these were our friends of the day before. They must have heard us when we got near, and taken the hint to decamp. We lay still watching them for a while, till they were close to the spot from which we had started to come down, and then there was nothing for it but to climb back. This arduous job having been accomplished, we found that the uryal had disappeared, and the man who had been left at the breakfast-place with the pony said that the rams had gone round the hollow of the hill, and crossed over to the other side of the nala. It was evidently no use pursuing them as they had been frightened, so we searched the rest of the hillside towards the east, but saw nothing except half a dozen small burhel. This occupied us the rest of the afternoon, and about 4 P.M. we turned homewards, no one feeling very cheerful. This was one of the coldest days we had, and the wind was awful. I rode as far as the foot of the hill when we started, and then

walked for the rest of the day. Coming back it was too cold to ride.

The following morning we started when the sun was well up, and were thankful to see that, though there were clouds about, it did not seem to be snowing on the hills. The wind too was less, and the cold therefore not so great. We went up the ridges towards which the uryal had gone the previous day, but up to 11 A.M. had seen nothing. So we sat down under a rock and had breakfast. When this was over the search was continued, and presently a ram was seen some distance down the hillside. We made a detour, and on the way sighted another. The going was exactly like that of the day before, and there was the same difficulty in preventing noise. The result, too, was similar, for when I went forward to the rock we had been making for, and from which I had hoped to get a shot, I found the animals gone, and immediately afterwards caught sight of three —evidently the three stalked before—right at the bottom of the nala. Apparently they had been disturbed by stones rolling down, and had bolted.

When I saw the herd it was about 250 yards off, and was going up a small side nala, so I lay down and fired at the ram with the best head. The first two bullets fell close to him, and he went out of sight to the left, up a narrow gorge, the other two running on. I put up the 300 yards' sight, and the second or third shot with this leaf up dropped the nearer of these two. Thinking he was done for, I turned my attention to the other, and fired a succession of shots with the 300, 400, and finally the 500 yards' sight up, as he went higher and higher.

The bullets fell all close around him, as we could see by the dust, much to the astonishment of the Ladāk shikāri, who had apparently never before seen a rifle performing like this. Finally, the ram went out of sight over the hill-top, and we descended to pick up the one which had fallen.

When we were near the bottom of the nala the wounded uryal struggled to his feet, and began limping up the hill after the one which had gone first. Evidently he had been hit on a hind-leg. Sitting down at once I fired several shots at him, all at long range, ending with the 500 yards' leaf up, but failed to hit him again, though as before the bullets raised the dust all round him, some being very close. Presently he disappeared as the first one had done, and as it was late, and following him then would have taken us directly away from camp, I turned back to the tents. It was evident that he had gone into the Rumbok nala, and we felt sure of picking up the trail next day.

Accordingly on the 3rd of October we went off to the Rumbok nala, and found blood immediately. We followed the slot the whole of that day, twice seeing the animal ahead, but being detected ourselves each time, and finally, at the point where the Zāskār river joins the Indus, reluctantly gave up the pursuit, as the uryal had turned up the Zāskār nala, and it was then getting dusk. In the course of the day, when we perceived where we should probably find ourselves by evening, we had sent a coolie back to have the tents taken to Nimu, on the Leh-Srinagar road. So when we had to give up we forded the Indus above the junction, and got into Nimu a little lower down shortly after dark. The tents arrived an hour later.

We had had a terrible day, as almost the whole of the going had been over slate shale. It was noticeable how the uryal seemed to leave any bit of ground where the going was fairly firm, in order to get on to this shale. Again and again that day I was struck by this. It did not seem to matter whether the shale was above or below the path he was following. If the latter became firm, and he was often on the beaten track, he would wander off, somewhere, till he got on to shale, when he would again resume the general direction towards Zāskār, and go fairly level. According to the map we had only come 12 miles from Farka, but the actual distance travelled, owing to the irregular track the animal pursued, must have been much longer.

On the morning of the 4th I paid off Rupsang, with much regret at having to part with him. He had been with me for close on three months, and proved himself a first-class shikāri all round, and one of the best-tempered, most cheerful servants I had ever had.

This was the end of my shooting in Ladāk, and very near, though I did not then know it, to the end of my holiday. Little of any importance occurred on the way back to Srinagar. Rejoining my wife we marched down by the ordinary stages to the valley.

At Bāzgo we noticed a prayer-wheel turned by an irrigation channel, the second of the kind I saw in Ladāk, the first having been a somewhat similar prayer-wheel in the Himis Monastery. It is curious how little, considering the ease of its application and the merit obtainable thereby, water-power is used in Ladāk for turning these wheels.

There had been recent snow on the Fotu Lā above Lāmāyuru, and a lot of this had melted and made the road very bad going. It was also exceedingly cold crossing. At Kharbu the thermometer stood at 29° in the tent when I got up, and the cold was bitter as we got over the Nāmika Lā.

We crossed the Zogi Lā on the 12th of October. The whole of the road from Mataiyun to the Pass was under snow, trodden into slush by the traffic, and in places very slippery. At the top of the Pass itself there was hard snow, but the descent was all slush, and it was very difficult to keep one's feet. Riding going down was impossible.

The rest-houses at Machahoi and Bāltāl were a sight. In the former there are three rooms. One was partially dry, but the two others were deep in mud, owing, apparently, to the melting snow and to animals having been kept there. The entire verandah was a swamp, well trodden by ponies and cattle. Apparently it had been regularly used as a stable.

At Bāltāl one room was occupied by some six or eight coolies, who had lighted fires on the mud-floor and were cooking. This was the room the Rentons had when they were here on 29th of March. Part of the roof and of the wall of the next room had been broken down, there being a large hole open to the sky, and just below another large hole communicating with the next apartment. This room, like the one in which the coolies were, was dry, but the next one was 2 or 3 inches deep in slush. The verandah, as at Machahoi, was entirely liquid mud, thoroughly churned up by the animals that had been

VIEW IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SONAMERG GORGE (p. 411).

stabled there, evidently, from the appearance of the place, in some numbers. The coolies' room, in which Jebb and I and the two other sportsmen had slept on the night of the 29th of March, was in the same condition as the verandah. None of our servants would occupy any part of this rest-house, although rain came on at dusk, and there was a strong wind blowing.

On the 13th we camped near Shitkuri, a couple of miles below Sonamerg, where the scenery all round was very pretty, dark pines mixed with gold and red tinted trees clothing the northern sides of the hills. The colour of the water was most peculiar, a sort of grayish greenish blue.

The 14th took us through some of the prettiest scenery in the Sind valley, if not in Kashmir. The river, with its lovely colour, wound along between rocky hills standing sheer in many places over the stream, mostly thickly wooded on both sides, quite to the top on the sides facing the north, and about a quarter of the way up on the opposite bank. The autumn colours were wonderfully vivid and bright, shades of gold and red predominating, and contrasting brilliantly with the dark green of the pines and cedars. The celebrated Sonamerg Gorge probably never looked better than it did that day, as the autumn tints on the trees lent a wealth of colour to the scene, which it wanted when I passed up in the "leafy month of June." I took a photograph of one pretty spot in the middle,[1] and another of the view up the lowest part from a little above Gāgangair.[2] Three days later, on the 17th, we marched into Srinagar and camped in the Munshi Bagh.

[1] See illustration on p. 409.

[2] See illustration on p. 417.

CHAPTER XXIII

OCTOBER 18 TO DECEMBER 1—SRINAGAR AND TRAAL

House-boat—Start for stag-shooting—Traal Reserve—Pleasant woods—Stags seen—Camp in northern glen—Blank days—Camp at top of the ridge—Family of bears—Male wounded—Tracking next day—Bear bagged—A good ten-pointer stag—Successful stalk—The Kājnāg markhor—Telegram recalling me—Leave Kashmir—Details of total bag.

For the next few days we were busy repairing damages sustained during our wanderings, and arranging about a house-boat for the winter months. After some trouble we succeeded in getting a fairly good boat (with four rooms, a bathroom, and pantry) for Rs.40 a month, and into this we transferred our goods and chattels. As the boat, of course, was unfurnished, and we had only a few camp things, purchases had to be made. So leaving my wife to the congenial task of putting up curtains, buying carpets, hangings, etc., I started on the 31st of October for the Traal Reserve, in which I had been courteously given permission by the Maharajah to shoot a stag.

This and the Wangat nala have been reserved of late years with a view to provide harbours of refuge for the Bārāsingh, which, owing to relentless pursuit in summer and winter alike, was threatened with extermina-

tion. A few stags are annually shot in these Reserves during the autumn by those specially permitted, but for the rest of the year the animals are safe.

I took with me only the light camp equipage I had used when on the hills near Sarsal in Bāltistān, and when going to Hanlè. That is, the two 30-lb. tents, one yākdān, one stores box, a bundle of bedding, etc. I also engaged another Kashmiri as cook, leaving Ramzāna with my wife.

The day I left Srinagar I camped a couple of miles beyond Aventipur, in the village of Giru. When passing the Tehsil building at Aventipur, I learned that the Tehsildar was the man who had so civilly got me ponies at Skardo on the 8th of April. The Pundit himself came out when I arrived, and insisted on my going into his house and having some tea,—Lhassa tea, strange to say, which means tea carried all the way from China across Tibet. It is difficult to understand how it can possibly be profitable to bring this tea to the north-west corner of India, yet the fact remains that caravan-carried China tea can be bought in the markets of Kashmir, and is very generally consumed in that country. At Giru we were met by a local shikāri, whom I engaged on Abdulla's recommendation. His home was close to the Reserve, and he was supposed to know the place well.

The following morning we went on some 8 miles to Kamla, and camped at the edge of the Reserve, which gets its name from a large village called Traal some 2 miles away.

The protected area consists of two semicircular glens facing north-west, and a ridge between, all three well

clothed with pines, cedars, birches, chestnuts, oaks, and numerous other kinds of trees. Many had lost their leaves when I arrived, but others had only changed colour, and stood out on the hillside blazing with gold and red. The undergrowth contained two or three kinds of ferns, notably the crisp, serrated maiden-hair, so common in the Simla woods (*Adiantum venustum*). Here and there on the hillsides were stretches of ground with nothing but red-berried rose-bushes and long, dry, brown grass, and it was on these open spaces, I was informed, that the deer were to be seen in the mornings and evenings, and there alone that a shot could be obtained. In the middle of the day the stags were in the shade of the woods, and of course unapproachable.

On the morning of the 2nd of November I once more put on grass shoes (not worn since the 19th of June, when I was in the Garhi nala, near Astor), and went up the southern of the two glens of which the Reserve consists, sending my camp on a couple of miles to the northern glen. We were not long reaching the crest, the walk being most enjoyable through the autumn woods. We saw a few hinds on the way, but nothing else.

From the crest we got an extended view over the valley of Kashmir. Looking back, we could see nearly to Srinagar, and ahead to the low hills around Islāmabād. We went northwards along the crest for some distance, and then, about nine o'clock, sat down on a bed of dry grass for the day. About noon the shikāri cooked my breakfast as usual. That day the matches had been forgotten, and Abdulla had to use the object-glass of my telescope as a burning-glass to kindle a fire. It

answered admirably. It was delightful sitting in the warm sunshine and looking at the landscape below me, bounded by the long line of snow that separates Kashmir from the plains of India.

About 3 P.M. we started downwards. In one patch of woodland we heard a stag moving, and waited for some time to see if he would come out. After a while we caught sight of him, but finding he was only a six-pointer, went on. Later on we saw several hinds and a few small stags, as well as one ten-pointer. The last was shootable; but I did not want to fire at a ten-pointer until I had seen whether a twelve-pointer could not be obtained. By dusk we reached the camp.

My tent was pitched in a spot very like England in its surroundings. In front a low quick hedge separated the patch of grass on which the tent stood from a field of growing winter wheat. To the left was a green lane winding between two hedgerows, and all about fine trees were dotted. It was beginning to get cold, but not unpleasantly so, and after a wash I got into bed, as usual, and called for dinner.

On the 3rd we went up by the northern edge of the Reserve to the crest again, and when we got there sat down for the day. With books and papers and writing the time passed rapidly, and in the afternoon we turned downwards, looking for game. A black bear was seen, but he disappeared in a wood before we could get near him. No deer were sighted on the way back.

The next day was also a blank. We went up the centre ridge, and came within 100 yards of an eight-pointer, which, on seeing us, hastened away in a

lumbering canter. Over the crest we caught sight of a ten-pointer, about 150 yards off, with forty hinds. As before, I considered it too soon to fire at him, and we went on. About ten o'clock we sat down for the day on the ridge, where it commanded a good view of the parts of the Reserve bare of trees. About five o'clock, having seen nothing, we went up the hillside, for, when leaving the camp in the morning, I had arranged to have the tents sent up to the top of the ridge which forms the boundary of the Reserve on that side.

The 5th was another blank. We got a glimpse of a black bear, and saw the ten-pointer of the day before again. After dinner it came on to rain. It had been gloomy and cold all day, and slight showers had fallen, so I had taken the precaution to have a good trench dug round my tent. It was well I had done so, for the rain was fairly heavy most of the night.

I did not go out till the afternoon on the 6th, and saw nothing worth stalking.

On the 7th, as we did not seem to gain anything by being on the ridge, I resolved to go back to Kamla, the village we were in the first day. Orders were given accordingly, and we spent the day as usual, but saw nothing except an eight-pointer.

On the following day (the 8th) we went up a ridge towards the southern side of the glen, and I passed another pleasant day, basking in the sunshine, and admiring the lovely panorama below me. Of game we saw nothing at all till the evening, when, as we were making our way downwards, we saw what we took to be a family of black bears—the father, mother, and two cubs. One,

VIEW AT THE LOWER END OF THE SONAMERG GORGE (p. 411).

which was probably the male, was some distance ahead of the others, in the bottom immediately below us, while the other three, which were obviously a she-bear and cubs, were descending the hillside opposite. The she-bear every now and then stopped under a large bush, and standing up, pulled down branches of berries into her mouth, the young ones closely imitating her actions, and evidently well acquainted with the method of feeding themselves on forest produce. It was quite pretty to watch them through the glass. The male was nearest to us, and we went downwards to intercept him if possible, but as it was only occasionally we could catch sight of him, I was afraid the bushes below would be too thick. When we got down into the hollow we advanced cautiously, stopping to listen every minute or so. Presently we heard rustling not very far off, and felt sure it was the bear. We had then halted in a small open space, and as the rustling was approaching us, stayed where we were. The animal, whatever it was, came to the edge of the opening; but instead of coming on, a course which would have brought him out ten yards in front of me, moved round the open patch just inside the jungle. As it passed a spot where the bushes were thin, I caught sight of the dark form of a black bear, but the view was not long enough to give me a shot. The undergrowth consisted here, and indeed all over the Reserve, of grass and thorn. A minute later the animal showed itself plainly, shuffling across a small opening, and the next moment was out of sight again.

I jumped up and followed as silently as I could, but it was impossible to avoid making some noise, and the

bear stopped to listen, as is the wont of his kind. I saw a mass of black amongst the bushes some 10 or 12 yards off, and promptly put a .303 bullet into the middle of it. The bear gave a howl and bolted off, and I knew he was hit. I had purposely used the Lee-Metford, because I knew the terrible injury that one of its split bullets does to an animal's interior, and it was impossible in the gloom to do more than make sure of hitting the beast somewhere. But when it came to tracking him in jungle alive with thorns and creepers, I wanted something with more stopping power, so took the Paradox 12 bore from the shikāri, and slipping in a couple of ball cartridges, started to follow. Abdulla came immediately after, carrying the .303, and the chota shikāri behind him.

There was plenty of blood, and there was no difficulty in seeing which way the bear had gone, but the stuff he had gone through was so tangled, that we had considerable difficulty in forcing a path for ourselves. The bushes had mostly thick branches, which would not bend near the ground, and we often had to lie down flat, and crawl through as best we could. It was possible to see some 3 or 4 yards ahead, so if he had charged, I should have had the time he would take to cover that distance, to get my gun up, and this should have been enough. We went on like this, till it became too dark to see the blood properly in the deep shade we had to work in, and we gave it up for the night.

Next morning we took up the track where we had dropped it the previous evening, and for a time had no difficulty in following the trail. But the blood was

getting less and less, and at last, when we reached the place where the beast had apparently spent the night, it ceased altogether. The hollow in which the bear had lain showed hardly any blood, and I could see none around on any of the twigs. While we were searching and talking in whispers, we noticed some scratches leading down the slope, for the spot we were at was a hillside. Abdulla followed them down some 3 or 4 yards, and then began gesticulating violently, indicating that I was to go to him. I slipped after him, but looking downwards to where he pointed, could see nothing. I, however, heard a rustling in the jungle below, as of some animal going towards the left. I at once went in that direction, keeping parallel to the sound and above it, and the next moment caught sight of the bear's hind-quarters about 7 or 8 yards off.

The report of the Paradox was followed by a yell, and the bear dashed off. Why he did not come at me I cannot imagine, for as I saw him plainly he must have seen me. Slipping in another cartridge, I followed as fast as the undergrowth would let me, but was astonished to find no fresh blood. "You have missed him," said the shikāri. "Then why did he yell?" said I. "There is no fresh blood," said the shikāri, a fact I could not deny. It was difficult to understand, and I thought I had lost the beast after getting as good a chance as was possible. Small traces of blood, evidently, from the colour and position on the twigs, due to the previous night's wound, enabled us to follow, and in a few minutes, while standing in an open spot looking about, we caught sight of the bear in some jungle beyond. Walking up to its

edge, I tried to make out how the animal was facing, but not being able to do so, fired into the black mass once more. The bear rolled over and then got up and turned, facing me, and fully expecting a charge, I stepped back, so as to give him some open ground to come across. But he thought better of it, and turned off to slink away. Again I fired, but he went on and I followed into the jungle, and presently he stood still, with his right shoulder exposed. This gave me the chance I wanted, and I killed with the next shot. I could have hit him in the head when he was facing me, but I did not want to injure that part of him, and would not fire at his face.

The bullet with which the shikāri said I had missed was found to have gone straight through the animal's stomach from side to side. Why it did not leave a track of fresh blood I cannot explain. Three Paradox bullets were picked out of the body, two having gone almost through, and being found under the skin on the opposite side. They had not flattened much, or otherwise altered considerably in shape. I could not discover where the Lee-Metford bullet had entered, but the place of exit in front of the stomach was plain enough. The vitality of the animal was remarkable. Two of the Paradox bullets had hit him in the neck in front of the shoulder. Ordinarily either should have proved fatal, but it was not till he received the fourth in the right shoulder that he finally dropped. This would seem to show that if he had charged, the Paradox even would not have been enough to stop him, unless he had been hit in the head. Nothing more was seen that day except a stag with a single horn.

On the morning of the 10th we went up the ridge

GRANITE CRAGS ON THE INDUS BELOW HIMMI (p. 366).

between the two glens, and when near the top saw a good-sized ten-pointer. As by this time I must have seen almost every stag in the Reserve, I had come to the conclusion that it did not contain a twelve-pointer. Consequently there was not much use in waiting longer, and I resolved to try for the animal before me. So we went after it. The stag was grazing slowly towards the woods, and when sighted was passing over a bare set of ridges and hollows that seamed the hillside. To approach him we had to get to the crest of the ridge, go along behind its shelter for some little distance, and then descend to the level on which our quarry was moving.

This we did without difficulty, and presently came in sight of him about 200 yards off, browsing off a tree. Between us was a hollow, and we had to wait till he had got into the next dip before we could move. Watching him through the glass, his horns looked fairly large and symmetrical. As soon as he had moved on we followed, and presently saw him about 70 yards or so ahead, on the opposite side of a hollow. He had evidently heard us, for he was standing behind a bush looking intently in our direction. I rested the Lee-Metford on a rock in front, and waited till he moved on, which he did almost immediately, and with his broadside exposed. I fired behind his shoulder, and he went up a small ridge and over the edge, two more bullets going after him as he disappeared. Then there was silence as the undergrowth ceased breaking, and the next minute I heard a heavy fall, and the crashing of branches told that the stag was rolling down the hill. When I got up to him he had

been stopped by his horns in a small tree, and though he must have been quite dead the shikāri cut his throat.

This was my last day after big game in Kashmir. On the 11th I returned to Srinagar, and a few days later went to Baramulla to settle preliminaries for going after the 50-inch markhor in the Kājnāg, of which I had heard when I was at Uri on my way into Kashmir, and which had not so far been shot. While there, a telegram arrived, recalling me to India, on account of the famine. So I returned to Srinagar to arrange for leaving, and, on the 1st of December, we started for Rawal Pindi.

The horns and skins I took with me, weighed, when packed, 10 maunds, 29 seers (= nearly 8 cwt.), and I left the bulk of the skins behind. The total bag[1] for the eight months' shoot was as follows :—

Name.	Number.	Size.
1. Ibex	4	42⅝″, 39½″, 39″, 36″
2. Markhor	1	48½″
3. Red Bear	3	6′, 4½″ long
4. *Ovis ammon*	2	34¼″ and 16½″ girth ; 32¼″ and 16″ girth
5. Yāk	1	29″ and 13″ girth
6. Tibet Antelope	4	25″, 24½″, 24″, 23½″
7. Tibet Gazelle	3	12⅝″, 12½″, 12¼″
8. Burhel	1	22¼″
9. Uryal	1	34½″
10. Bārāsingh	1	Ten-pointer, 37″
11. Black Bear	1	Not measured
	22	

A brief analysis of the time spent on this expedition may not be uninteresting, as showing the number of days on which shooting may be expected when after

[1] The small heads are of course not counted.

Himalayan game. From the 15th of March to the 30th November, both days inclusive, is 260 days. This

KASHMIR STAG (*Cervus cashmerianus*).

Length on curve	37″	Tip to tip	20″
Circumference	5″	Widest inside	29″
Points	5+5″		

(Measurements by ROWLAND WARD.)

was the amount of my leave, 8 months and 16 days. During this period, 121 days were spent in travelling, 97 days in searching for game, and 42 days in halting.

Out of the 97 days spent after game, 34 were entirely blank, nothing fit to shoot being seen, while on 27 days, though what were believed to be shootable heads were discovered, it was for some reason or other found impossible to shoot. So that on 61 out of 97 days of legitimate hunting, not a shot was fired. Of the remaining 36 days, on each of which the rifle was let off, shots were missed on 10, and game was bagged on 26. In other words, it may be roughly estimated that a sportsman, on a six or eight months trip, is likely to spend half his leave in travelling, a sixth of it in halting, and only about one-third in actually searching for game.

CHAPTER XXIV

GENERAL HINTS

Hints only for those who do not know Kashmir—Sportsman should settle what game he will go for—Colonel Ward's book for localities—Importance of arriving early and travelling fast—A good shikāri should be secured—The chota shikāri a fraud—Ladāk shikāris—Cook—Permanent coolies—Pay of servants—Rasad—Currency notes—Changing notes in the interior.

As many men annually visit Kashmir for shooting purposes who have never been there before, it has occurred to me that some hints as to the country, its people, and the requirements of a sportsman visiting its nalas, would probably be found useful. The remarks in this and succeeding chapters have therefore been put together, and are based mainly on my own experience. It must be clearly understood that they are meant solely for those who do not know Kashmir, as I should not venture, after only one season's shooting, to make suggestions for the guidance of men who have been in the country before.

When a sportsman has made up his mind to visit Kashmir, with the object of shooting, the first thing he should do is to definitely settle what game he proposes

to go for. This will necessarily depend largely on the amount of leave that he may succeed in obtaining, or the time he may otherwise be able to spare in the country. There is so little game now to be had, and it is scattered over such extensive tracts, that a man with only a short time at his disposal should not attempt to do too much. If he does, he will probably have very hard work while in Kashmir, and will not get a decent bag. Three months is about the shortest period in which a man can hope to get shooting in some of the more distant nalas, and I doubt if it is worth while going to Kashmir for less than this. A year is the time I should recommend for doing a thoroughly good shoot. I was there for about eight months, and if I had remained on for another couple of months or so, I ought to have added one or two markhor, some black bears, a couple of stags, and probably a common leopard to my bag. In six months a good deal can be done, provided a man is prepared to work hard, and does not shirk the long marching which has to be got through by any one who wants to cover much ground.

If three months only is available, the choice of the ground will be affected by the time of the year. If the sportsman goes in the spring, then I should recommend Bāltistān, and suggest his trying for markhor, ibex, and red bear. If he goes in the autumn he should, I think, make for Ladāk, and endeavour to secure some two or three of the animals obtainable in that part of Kashmir. Of course, if some special kind of game is wanted the case is different. For instance if a man wants *Ovis ammon* in particular, he would do well to go to Ladāk in

the spring. It is generally admitted that the best rams are to be found then, not in the autumn. No one seems to know where they disappear to in the summer. The best available information on the subject of the localities of game, is to be found in Colonel Ward's book, *The Sportsman's Guide to Kashmir and Ladāk*, published, I believe, by the Calcutta Central Press Company. The latest edition should be got, for much of what is said in the older editions no longer applies, so rapidly are the circumstances changing which are connected with shooting in Kashmir.

If the sportsman decides to go in the spring, it is impossible for him to get in too early. The competition for good nalas is very keen, and the racing for them spoils, to a very large extent, the pleasure of the trip. Nevertheless, there is nothing for it but to race. The moment the passes into Kashmir are open, the sportsman who thinks it worth while to go to some trouble for a good nala, should cross. I was in Srinagar by the 24th of March, but over a dozen, perhaps twenty, men had by that date left for the shooting grounds. It was more by good luck, than good management, that I succeeded in reaching Haramosh in time. If the sportsmen in front of me had not stopped at nearer nalas, I should never have succeeded. And if I had not got there, I should certainly not have got a markhor.

After getting in early, the sportsman should spend as short a time as possible in Srinagar. One day ought to be enough, unless he requires a puttoo suit or two, in which case he may have to wait a second. Then, leaving tents, boxes, and all his heavier baggage to follow, he

should start for the nala he wishes to secure, with nothing but his bedding, a tiffin basket, a couple of cooking pots, and a few stores. His only attendants should be, one man to cook for him, and one man to arrange for coolies, ponies, and other details of the journey. If the latter individual can cook, so much the better, as one servant would then be enough. Three ponies (or, if there is no separate cook, two) will carry the entire party, men and luggage included. Where ponies cannot be used—as over snow—coolies must be employed; but ponies will save time, and should therefore be taken whenever it is possible. The start should be made by dawn each morning, and travelling should be continued with one halt of, say, an hour for breakfast, till it is nearly dusk, when the party can stop at the nearest point where wood and water are procurable. It is not pleasant going like this for days, without a tub, with hardly a change of shirts, and with nothing to relieve the monotony of the perpetual marching; but when a favourite nala has to be raced for, the man who can stand most of this sort of travelling will generally get it. Once in the nala that is required, the race is over, and the sportsman who has won can rest there quietly till his things are brought up by his servants. But it must be remembered that he must himself get into the nala first, in order to win it, as sending on a shikāri with his tent would certainly not secure it.

Unless the sportsman proposes to shoot in Ladāk, he should, if possible before entering Kashmir, if not, as soon as he can afterwards, secure the services of a good shikāri. Generally this is best done through a friend or acquaint-

ance resident in Srinagar, or a brother sportsman who has been for a trip through the country. There are a number of pseudo-shikāris in Kashmir — men who pretend to know everything, while in reality they know nothing —and it is sometimes difficult to avoid falling into the hands of these gentry. But a shikāri secured through a friend, or through some one who has been shooting in Kashmir, is usually all right. It is not physically possible for a single man to know all parts of the district in which game is to be found, so any one who professes this knowledge should be viewed with suspicion; but every good shikāri knows certain nalas intimately, and in others he has not visited, he will obtain locally all the information required.

The main duty of a good shikāri is to take his employer up to game unperceived, that is to place him within reasonable range, without allowing the animal pursued to suspect the presence of danger.[1] Few men have the experience and patience required for this. It will have been noticed in the preceding narrative how often my presence was detected by the game before I fired a shot. Generally this was due to Abdulla's impatience. He was a good shikāri, on the whole— exceedingly keen on his work, most energetic, an untiring walker, and gifted with marvellous quickness of eyesight — but his impatience on a stalk was uncontrollable, and he more than once spoiled a good chance by showing himself over a bit of exposed ground, which

[1] It will be remembered that the remarks in this and succeeding chapters are only meant for those unacquainted with Kashmir game; experienced sportsmen would prefer to do the stalking for themselves.

he could have avoided crossing by a more circuitous route, or which he could have got over with safety if he had waited a bit. When a man has spent weeks in travelling to his shooting ground, an hour or two one way or the other is of little consequence in approaching the game. The difficulty is that shootable heads are not often seen. When one has been found, no trouble should be shirked in getting within range unperceived. There is rarely any use in hurrying, as, in the majority of cases, the animal will not go away as long as danger is not suspected.

The custom has in some way grown up in Kashmir for a shikāri to have a subordinate, a second or "chota"[1] shikāri, to assist him. The chota shikāri is usually a brother or other relative, who is perhaps learning his work, and thus the family secures more pay out of the sportsman. The system is, I think, a bad one, and should be put an end to, as far as possible. The chota shikāri is of little use to his employer. On reaching the nala where the sportsman proposes to shoot, it is almost always advisable to secure the services of a local man. If he is a shikāri, he can be taken as chota shikāri to the headman. If not, he can be employed as a coolie to carry the tiffin, or can be simply taken along to give information. In any case the chota shikāri (the headman's relative) is not required. Consequently, when engaging a shikāri, I should tell him that I would not employ a chota shikāri till I got to the shooting ground, but would then engage a local man to assist. It might be necessary to give the shikāri a little higher pay, but even so, it would

[1] = Little.

be a cheaper and better arrangement than engaging his relative or friend to assist him.

It will be observed that the above remarks concerning the shikāri are intended for men who are not going to shoot in Ladāk. Those who are, should not, I think, engage a Kashmiri shikāri at all. Kashmiris do not seem to pull well with Ladākis, and strongly dislike the country of the Buddhists. To a Kashmiri, rice is the staff of life, and rice is ruinously dear in Leh. There are not, it is true, many shikāris in Ladāk, but still there are a few, and it would generally be better, I think, to trust to one of them than to a man taken up from the valley. Even if a Ladāk shikāri is not procurable, the sportsman could generally secure the services of a local man, who would accompany him on his wanderings, arrange for transport, and help in obtaining from the nomads information about game. This would be all he would absolutely require, and if he had a good head for stalking, was a fair shot, and was lucky in sighting game, he should do well.

The servants required on a shooting expedition are luckily few, and are generally procurable in the country itself. Practically the only two are the shikāri and the cook. The former has been already referred to, and must be engaged in Kashmir. The latter can be got easily enough in Kashmir, but he is usually not much of a cook, and is particularly dirty in his habits. Consequently, if any sportsman, about to visit the country, is the fortunate possessor of a good cook with a strong physique, he should certainly bring him. If not, a Kashmiri must be engaged. This man will probably be

found hard-working, and capable of long marches over any country, but that is about all that can be said in his favour.

The newcomer will be told, as I was, that he will require a number of permanent coolies. These men are generally nominated by the shikāri, and are usually his friends or relations. They are supposed to carry a load on the march, and then to be available for bringing water, cutting wood, washing clothes and vessels, etc. From my experience, they are a fraud as to these matters. The load each carries gets less and less, till, as in the case of my men coming down from the Borzil, it practically disappears. The wood and water for my camp were always brought by the temporary coolies I employed. My permanent coolies I found useful in carrying my letters, etc., from or to the post, and it was also convenient to have one man like the tiffin coolie, to arrange the tent the same way every day. But there is no necessity for the number of men the employment of whom the shikāri is sure to recommend. If I were going again to Bāltistān, or to some of the nalas communicating with the valley of Kashmir, I should engage about four permanent coolies, one to act as tiffin coolie, who would arrange my tent and wash clothes when necessary; one to assist the cook in the kitchen; and two to carry the post and perform any other miscellaneous duties that might be required. If I were going to Ladāk, I should not take any permanent coolies from Kashmir at all, unless I found it convenient, on account of having engaged a Kashmiri cook, to give him a countryman as an assistant in the kitchen. At Leh I

should engage one Ladāki as a tiffin coolie, and another, or perhaps two more, as regular post-runners.

Custom has fixed pretty rigidly the pay of most servants in Kashmir. A shikāri now claims Rs.25 a month, plus Rs.5 a month for rasad or travelling rations. Some ask Rs.30, but the understood rate is Rs.25. A cook generally gets from Rs.12 to Rs.15, with Rs.5 added for rasad. The pay of a permanent coolie is Rs.6 with Rs.2 for rasad in the valley of Kashmir, and Rs.7 with Rs.2.8 for rasad in Bāltistān and Ladāk. The tiffin coolie is given R.1 extra. A chota shikāri, should one be employed, gets Rs.15 a month, with Rs.2.8 for rasad. The charge for rasad, when travelling far away from the valley of Kashmir is not unreasonable, as supplies are procurable with difficulty, and are sometimes dear. But it appears to be the custom to allow rasad, even in the valley, when the sportsman is away from Srinagar. For this there can be no manner of reason, as frequently rice and other necessities are cheaper in outlying villages than in Srinagar. I should mention that some sportsmen, instead of allowing a fixed sum for rasad, pay for the food of their men. Rasad, of course, is not allowed in Srinagar itself.

Money should be taken to Kashmir entirely in Indian Government currency notes. The Punjab Banking Company has a branch at Srinagar, and charges a half per cent for exchanging notes for Indian rupees, whereas all merchants will exchange notes for Indian rupees at par. Sportsmen passing through Skardo can get their notes changed by the tehsildar there, who presumably finds them a convenience in

remitting revenue to headquarters. There are shopkeepers at many of the inland places, such as Astor, Bunji, Drās, etc., who are always ready to give rupees for notes (at par). At Leh, notes are also gladly taken in exchange for rupees, unless a large sum is required, when application should be made to the British Joint Commissioner. A considerable proportion of the silver taken from Srinagar should be in small change, four anna and two anna pieces. Coolies in Bāltistān much prefer being paid separately, to being given a lump sum in rupees to divide amongst themselves. In Ladāk small coins are not so much required.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BATTERY AND TENTS

Srinagar shops—Hiring things—Government workshops—Gunsmiths—*The Sportsman's Vade Mecum for the Himalayas*—The Lee-Metford the best weapon—Hits hard—Flat trajectory—Accurate at long ranges—Slight noise—No smoke—Light cartridges—Cheapness—Double Lee-Metfords—A second carbine an advantage—Flanges near sight should be filed off—Bullets—Ends should be rounded—Shot-gun should shoot ball—Number of cartridges—Tents—Sowar's pāl—Kashmir tent—Pegs.

Some of the articles which the sportsman requires are either procurable only in Srinagar, or are best obtained in that city. There are several shops where these can be bought, the best known being those of Mahomed Jān, Bāhar Shah, and Sammad Shah, who call themselves bankers and shawl merchants, and are prepared to supply the stranger with everything he requires, from a shikāri to a toothbrush. Besides the things they sell, they keep a miscellaneous supply of tents, furniture, and other shooting requisites, which they are prepared to hire out. These things require very careful selection, but should something have been forgotten, or have gone astray, it may be necessary to hire. Tents and furniture can also, I believe, be obtained from Cockburn's

Agency, where, as the management is European, the articles would probably be better. One ingenious subaltern I met told me that he spent a morning in going backwards and forwards between two of the native shops in Srinagar, and by pitting one against the other, succeeded in getting the tent, chair, table, and washhand-stand he required at one rupee a month for the lot! This was using the principle of competition to very considerable advantage, but it cannot always be carried so far.

Furniture, suitable for camping, can also be obtained at reasonable rates from the Government Workshops, and if the sportsman is early in Srinagar, before the best things are sold out, he could rig himself out fairly well here, as a good stock is generally then available.

There are also a couple of very good gunsmiths, who work exceedingly well in iron and brass, and can restock a weapon very neatly. One of these, a man of the name of Usmāna, was employed by me to make a foresight protector, and did it well. He also made me a very neat ivory foresight, and browned my wife's rook rifle. He showed me some excellent testimonials from sportsmen who had preceded me.

Articles made of leather will also have to be bought, such as chaplis (leather sandals) and leather socks. These are not obtained from the shops, but from traders called chapli wallas, who will be certain to make themselves known to every visitor on his arrival.

The great majority of the things the sportsman requires he will necessarily bring into the country with him, and as a guide in selecting these it would be impossible for him to do better than generally follow the advice of

K. C. A. J., the author of *The Sportsman's Vade Mecum for the Himalayas.*[1] This book was beside me when preparing for my own expedition, and I found it simply invaluable. It has been prepared with the greatest care by a genuine sportsman, who enters into the minutest details with a thoroughness which leaves nothing to be desired. But as time passes, and fresh knowledge is acquired, opinions have to be modified, a fact which the gallant author of the *Vade Mecum* would be himself the first to admit. Further, that work deals generally with camping in the Himalayas, and necessarily, therefore, omits much which the traveller to Kashmir should know, and which is peculiar to that country. It is for these reasons that I have ventured to make a few suggestions.

The articles which a sportsman requires can be conveniently classed under seven heads, and considered in the order given below :—

I. Battery
II. Tents
III. Furniture
IV. Stores
V. Kitchen utensils
VI. Clothes
VII. Miscellaneous

I.—Battery

The weapon which I think is best suited to shooting in Kashmir is a sporting .303 Lee-Metford carbine, sighted to 500 yards, and provided with the usual magazine for ten cartridges. I consider this weapon, for Kashmir shooting, superior to any express. There is

[1] Published by the *Field* Office.

nothing an express will do which the carbine will not do, and many things that can be done by the carbine which would be impossible with the express. The carbine, with a sporting bullet, will hit as hard as any express, has a flatter trajectory, and is accurate at far longer ranges. In eight months' shooting I only lost two animals which had been hit with the Lee-Metford. One was the uryal, wounded on the leg, and the other the *Ovis ammon*, scratched by a splinter of a bullet. More than one animal fell to a single shot, and the rifle was found enough for a full-grown bull yāk. The advantages of the flat trajectory cannot be overrated in hill shooting, where judging distance is such a serious difficulty. It is hard enough to estimate correctly a distance on the flat, but to do it with a ravine between the shooter and his game requires long practice. The advantage, therefore, of a weapon with which an error of a hundred yards is comparatively unimportant is very great indeed.

But it is in its accuracy at long ranges that the carbine is most markedly superior to the express. The hollow bullet cannot be depended on beyond 200 yards, and even at that range the shooting of most express rifles is erratic. But the Lee-Metford is almost as true at 500 yards as at 200. No animal standing inside of 500 yards from the rifle is really safe, and as yet few animals, if any, are aware of the fact. An ibex will run off to 300 yards or so, and then turn and calmly watch his pursuer. He would be practically safe from an express, but is in almost as much danger there from the Lee-Metford as if he had been only 200 yards off. My shikāris at first

thought I was only throwing away cartridges, when they saw me firing at over 200 yards. It was not till they saw the dust fly all round the animal aimed at, and occasionally saw him come down, that they began to believe in the accuracy of the little rifle. This is why I think the carbine selected should be sighted to 500 yards. All sporting carbines used to be sighted to this range, but recently those brought to India have been only sighted to 300. This is not, I think, sufficient. The weapon is quite accurate enough for the longer range, and a sportsman is, I think, badly handicapped if he has no sight for anything beyond 300 yards.

As minor advantages I may mention the slight noise made by the report, the absence of smoke, the absence of recoil, and the lightness of the cartridges. Until I showed myself, most of the game I fired at did not know where the shot came from. The three antelope killed on the 30th of August would probably never have been bagged if I had been using an express, as the shots fired at the first one I saw that day would in that case have cleared them out of the country. The lightness of the cartridges is not a matter of much moment; still it is a point distinctly in favour of the .303. Perhaps also the difference in the original cost might be mentioned. A first-class express by a good maker will cost 60 guineas. The best Lee-Metford carbine in the market can be bought for about a fifth of this sum.

All the gunmakers now sell double-barrelled weapons of .303 bore. I do not think these are as good as the carbine with the magazine. It is true that the second barrel enables a second shot to be put in much quicker

than can be done when the rifle has to be taken from the shoulder, to allow another cartridge to be fed up from the magazine. But it is very rarely that this extra speed is of any advantage. I remember one occasion, and one only, while I was out, when I should have been glad to have had a second barrel. On all other occasions I found that the magazine supplied me quite fast enough with a second cartridge. And it did more. It supplied me with nine others as fast as it had given me the second. Consequently all subsequent loading, after the first two shots had been fired, was done much faster with the carbine than would have been possible with a double-barrel. But there is another point. It must be very difficult to align two barrels, so that they shall both throw accurately to 500 yards. I have never tried a double-barrelled .303 at this distance, and do not know, consequently, how it behaves, but I cannot help thinking that a single rifle like the carbine, must be more accurate at this long range than any double could be.

Owing to the danger of accidents, I would suggest that two carbines should be taken. When the stock of mine worked loose, I would willingly have given a long sum for a second weapon.

One other point should be mentioned. The carbine I bought—and others may be made like it—had two sight protectors in the shape of small flanges at the sides of the foresight. Looked at from the breech end, these were exactly like two black beads beside the white bead of the foresight, and in taking a quick aim when trying the rifle first, I more than once found myself using a flange over my back sight, instead of the right bead. As

this, of course, would have been a fatal error, if done at the end of a stalk, I at once filed off the two flanges so as to remove all danger of a mistake.

Closely connected with the question of the rifle to use is that of the bullet. I used Jeffrey's split bullets in mine, and found them work well. But I have heard men say, and it is, I should think, very probable, that they are not as accurate at long ranges as the full-sized uncut bullet, and that in a rifle sighted with the latter they go high. I never have had time to test my rifle on a range, but I know that with the Jeffrey bullet and its present sighting, it shoots very high indeed. This objection would probably not apply if the Tweedie or Dumdum expanding bullets were used, as they must be of the same weight as the old service bullet, and if I were going again, I should, I think, try some cartridges with these expanding bullets. But I would not again use the unslit truncated bullet—that is, the bullet with the nose only cut off. I had a few of these, and believe that it was owing to them that I nearly lost an ibex, and did for a time lose the first uryal I hit. I do not think they expand or break up in passing through, and if my surmise is correct they are quite useless. The Jeffrey bullet is truncated also, but the slits down the sides generally ensure its breaking up on impact, and though the bullet goes through in the majority of cases, the wound it makes is terrible.

Major Hewat, whom I met on the 8th of April at Tsurri, put me up to a useful tip in connection with these truncated bullets, Jeffrey's and others. The service bullet, having a round nose, can be fed up from the

magazine into the barrel without difficulty, but the truncated bullet, having the round nose cut off square, will not feed at all, as the edge catches on the lip of the chamber. To enable these bullets to be used from a magazine, it is necessary to file the edges so as to make a round nose. I did this always with the cartridges I used, and had no trouble. A triangular file was one of the things I always carried in my brief bag.

In addition to the Lee-Metford rifles, a shot-gun that will shoot ball should also be carried. Something larger than a .303 is required when following up a black bear, or it may be a leopard. Personally I like a 12-bore Paradox for work like this, as the bullet is much heavier than that of a gun of the same bore. But this is to a certain extent a matter of taste. Some sportsmen like a 12-bore rifle. It does not very much matter, only that occasionally a few hares or pigeons may be wanted for the pot, and then the shot-gun comes in useful.

As to rifle cartridges it is better to have too many than too few, especially as those for the .303 are very light to carry. The number of first shots obtained is not numerous, but when a herd has been successfully approached, it is very easy to fire off a lot of cartridges, and I would suggest taking 300 for a six months' trip. For the gun I should take 150 of No. 5 or No. 6 shot, and about 50 loaded with ball. I had 300 for the Lee-Metford and 400 for the Paradox (300 shot and 100 ball). I used more than half of those for the .303, but only about 20 of the shot, and 5 of the ball cartridges. Of course, if the sportsman proposes duck shooting in the cold

weather, he must arrange differently, but I am here dealing only with the question of big game, and an occasional use of the shot-gun.

II.—Tents

The choice of tents depends largely on a sportsman's own tastes, but it should be remembered that carriage is, wherever coolies have to be employed, a matter of some difficulty, and the lighter a man's baggage is, the quicker he will travel, and the less trouble he will have in the matter of transport. If a sportsman is by himself, I do not think he requires more than a 30-lb. Sowar's pāl for himself, and the same for his servants. This tent has only a single fly, but it will keep out any but very long continued and heavy rain. For all the rain that is likely to be experienced, it is quite enough. It was very wet for a couple of days while I was in the Khaltar nala, but my tent never leaked. The space inside is quite sufficient. The floor between the tent poles is about 7 feet square, and then there is an extension of semicircular shape opposite the entrance, which gives room for a lot of spare things. I always slept on the ground when using this tent, on a thick brown waterproof sheet, and was perfectly comfortable. I carried an adze, and used generally to dig with it a hollow for my hips when the tent was up. Then the sheet was laid down and the bedding spread, and I was as comfortable as in a spring bed, and warmer, for no cold could come up from below. The walls of this tent are only a foot high, and are practically useless as walls. I always had them weighted with stones from outside to keep out the wind, for a draught is very un-

pleasant when sleeping on the ground. If the sportsman requires a bedstead, he should get this tent made, so as to have the walls about 2 feet high. They should also be provided with rings, at intervals of a couple of feet along the edge, so that they can be pegged down. A ventilator in the roof would also be an advantage, and I would suggest a few pockets on the inside of the walls. Church had a tent of this kind, which had been specially made to his order, and very comfortable it seemed. Hooks attached to a strap to go round the tent pole are most useful. The cost of a Sowar's pāl is Rs.34 at the Elgin Mills, Cawnpore. It is not provided with a carpet or a durrie, but this is not required. It is very essential that the outside colour should be khāki, as this renders the tent far less conspicuous than if it were white. In the Elgin Mills tents the colour is perfectly fast.

If the sportsman is married, I do not think he can do better than use what is called a Kashmir tent, such as we had when we started from Leh. These tents are a little heavy, as mentioned already, but having a double fly extending over the bathroom, they are fairly warm, and being 10 feet by 10 feet they are quite sufficiently roomy. The inner fly should be supplied with pockets all round, and a thick cord running through rings sewn to the fly at intervals of 2 feet above the pockets. These are very convenient for stowing away things which would otherwise lie about and litter the tent. The walls should be made in one with the inner fly, to keep out draughts, and the colour outside should be khāki, to render the tent as little conspicuous as possible. The three poles should be jointed in the middle.

In addition a couple of pāls for the servants, are all that would ordinarily be required. These also should be of khāki colour, and if larger than a sowar's pāl should have the poles jointed in the middle.

The pegs of all tents should be of iron, and a fair number, say 25 per cent, of spare ones should be taken and locked up in one of the yākdāns. All pegs in use should be made over to some one man, whose duty it would be to count them, and who might be told that a small reward would be given him at the end of the expedition if not more than say 10 or 15 per cent were lost. Some precaution like this is necessary, as iron is of considerable value all over Kashmir, and Balti and Ladāki coolies alike will steal the tent-pegs whenever they get the chance.

CHAPTER XXVI

FURNITURE, STORES, KITCHEN UTENSILS, AND CLOTHES

Elliot camp bed—Paragon table—Iron basin—Canvas chairs—Stores—The list in the *Vade Mecum* very good—Additions to it—Great value of tea—Kitchen utensils—Tiffin basket—Jam-pots—Clothes—Suits—Cardigan jacket—Socks—Putties—Hat—Gloves—Grass-shoe socks—Boots—Chaplis—Puttoo boots—Overcoat—Belt—Waterproof cape—Goggles—Servants' things.

III.—Furniture

In the way of furniture there is not much wanted. A solitary sportsman does not, in my opinion, require bed, table, or chair. But if he considers these things essential to his comfort, I would suggest a camp bed like that described in the *Sportsman's Vade Mecum* already referred to, any simple kind of small folding table, and a paragon stool as supplied by the Army and Navy Stores. I took a camp bed made by Messrs. Luscombe and Co. of Allahabad, and known as Major Elliot's patent. It was $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and folded into a most conveniently small package, as there were no long poles to harass a coolie or wobble about on a pony's back. It was also very strong and very light. But it had the serious disadvantage of

being a little complicated to put together, and required a certain amount of intelligence and patience. These qualities my Kashmiris certainly had not got, and the putting together of the camp bed almost always required my personal supervision. As a table I had one of the paragon type, which I consider, in most respects, the best camp table made—very stable, very roomy, extraordinarily light, and capable of folding into wonderfully limited space. But, like the Elliot bed, it required intelligence to put together, and consequently mine got broken almost immediately after I started. For servants like Kashmiris, who are singularly stupid, whose fingers are all thumbs, and who hurry through their work in the most perfunctory manner, with the sole idea of getting done with it anyhow in the shortest possible time, articles like the bed and table I took with me are not suitable.

For tubbing most travellers use the ordinary india-rubber bath, and I do not know anything better. As a washhand basin I took a canvas thing made by Luscombe and Co., which fitted on a tripod, jointed in the middle. It was certainly very portable, but that was all that could be said in its favour. It leaked habitually, and was always tumbling over, it was so top heavy. I should recommend an iron enamel basin, furnished with a leather cover to be strapped on. In this could be carried towel, brushes, comb, soap-box, etc., so that all requisites for washing would be found together. A strongly made, rather squat wooden stand should accompany it.

Something more in the way of furniture is required if

the sportsman be married, but not much. Besides a second camp bed, there should be two tables—one to dine at, and one to act as a toilet-table. The latter with us was about 1½ feet square, made of toon wood, and closed by a hinge in the middle. This we found an excellent pattern. A couple of chairs would also be needed. We had two, which took to pieces, each with canvas back and seat, and leather straps for arms. One was from Luscombe and Co., and the other was exactly similar, but made in the Government workshops at Srinagar. These chairs can be used at a low table for dinner, and they are comfortable to sit in afterwards. They pack into small compass, and are light. I do not know anything better for Kashmir, but, unfortunately, they are rather complicated to put together.

IV.—Stores

The stores to be taken must necessarily vary with the taste of each individual, and it is impossible for a list to be made out which would suit every one. That given in the *Sportsman's Vade Mecum* is an admirable one, and contains almost everything that is really necessary. The quantities are apparently intended for a three months' trip, but I will make a remark or two later on as to this. Most of the articles mentioned can be obtained in Srinagar, but it is unwise to rely on what can be had there, as the freshness of what is got cannot be depended on. The supply of provisions, especially of vegetables, should be liberal. In Bāltistān nothing can be bought locally, except flour, atta (whole meal), sheep, kabānis (dried apricots), eggs, milk, fowls, and a kind of butter

which a Kashmiri cook makes into ghi[1] for frying. Sheep and kabānis can always be obtained, but there is difficulty sometimes about the other things. In many villages there are no fowls. On the Ladāk shooting grounds no supplies but sheep and milk are locally procurable, and sometimes, as in Changchenmo, even these cannot be had. Everything else has to be taken from Leh. There all the things obtainable in Bāltistān are to be found. In the spring in Bāltistān wild rhubarb is fairly common, and in some places wild onions. I used both these whenever I got the chance, and while they were tender enough to eat, but there is no other vegetable food to be had there except kabānis. Consequently a good supply of tinned vegetables should be taken. I found compressed vegetables very useful in soup. Bacon was another thing I placed great reliance on.

Ordinarily while I was alone my chota hāzri consisted of a slice of fried bacon, two or three cold chupatties, and tea, sometimes jam being added, but never milk or butter. At breakfast I usually had some slices of mutton, cut from the preceding night's joint, heated in the frying-pan, with a few boiled potatoes. Rarely there were a couple of onions fried with the other things. Cold chupatties, jam, and tea finished up the meal. At dinner there was generally soup, a roast joint of mutton, hot potatoes, hot chupatties, and stewed kabānis. Instead of the joint I sometimes had curried mutton and rice, and (when near a village where milk could be procured) rice pudding occasionally took the place of kabānis. Sometimes wild rhubarb, stewed,

[1] Clarified butter.

made the pudding. This diet was too monotonous, and, combined with bad cooking, want of cleanliness in the kitchen, and snow water, eventually so knocked me up that I was compelled the following year to take sick leave. It would have been wiser to have brought a larger supply of eatables so as to have had a more varied diet, and I would recommend sportsmen to be liberal in allowing themselves such luxuries as dried figs, Californian fruit, tinned vegetables, prunes, etc.

Personally, if I were starting on a three months' trip again, I should take everything mentioned in K. C. A. J.'s list, except the Erbswürst and cocoa and milk, but I should make the following changes in the quantities :—

Tea.—I would take 12 lbs. instead of 6, so as to have some to spare for the servants and coolies after a hard day.

Candles.—I would take 15 lbs. Allowing 2 a night, a pound would last 6 nights ; therefore, for 90 nights, 15 pounds would be necessary.

Soups.—I found Lazenby's soup squares very useful. Half a cake made enough soup for one dinner. Kashmiris are good generally about making soup, but occasionally there is no time, and then the squares save much trouble. I would take 6 cakes, assorted.

Soap.—I would take 6 bars of common yellow soap for washing the *jhārans* (kitchen cloths) and clothes, and half a dozen tablets of toilet soap for personal use.

Bacon.—This would probably be used every morning, and I think that 13 lbs. is the least amount that should be taken. I found it a good plan to have the meat boiled

in the tin, and kept there for convenience in carrying, slices being cut out as required.

In addition I should take the following articles :—

Army rations, 4 tins.	Butter, 1 lb. a week.
Hotch-potch soup, 4 tins.	Biscuits (cabin), 7 lbs.
Cornflour, 1 tin.	Potatoes, 164 lbs. (two maunds).
Essences (assorted), 6 bottles.	Onions, 21 lbs. (a quarter maund).
Figs, 3 boxes.	Rice, 20 lbs.
Prunes, 3 bottles.	Alum, 10 lbs.
Californian fruit, 6 tins.	Arsenical soap, 4 tins.
Curry powder, 1 bottle.	Vaseline, 2 one-pound tins.

The army rations and hotch-potch soup come in exceedingly handy when there is no time to cook, or when no materials are available. One tin furnishes an appetising and wholesome meal, and can be heated up in a few minutes. After a long march, when one gets in late, and the servants are all tired, it is well to consider them and not require a regular dinner. A tin of army rations or hotch-potch soup is then just the thing.

Cornflour is excellent for puddings as a change.

Essences are most useful for flavouring puddings, and making food appetising which otherwise would only be eaten as a necessity. The bottles are very small, and weigh next to nothing.

Figs, prunes, and Californian fruits I would take, so as to get wholesome vegetable food in as much variety as possible.

Curry powder will enable the cook to make a good meal out of a joint, which, as cold mutton or hash, would perhaps not be relished.

Butter can be easily had. If tinned butter is liked, a few tins can be taken. If not, arrangements can be

made with Mr. E. Keventer, of the Dairy Farm, Aligarh, for, say, a pound of fresh butter to be posted every week to Srinagar. It will be sent on from there to the post-office nearest the sportsman's beat, and reach him with his letters.

Cabin biscuits are a pleasant change from chupatties, or even scones. I had none with me, and often wished for them.

Potatoes, onions, and rice would, of course, be bought in Srinagar. A liberal supply is required, as the Kashmiris will assist the sportsman in getting rid of them, and it is not possible to prevent this. The onions and rice they specially appreciate.

Alum and arsenical soap are necessary for the skins, and vaseline for cleaning the guns, and (if the vinolia cream gives out) for lubricating the face.

Some one who can speak with authority (I think it is Mr. Norman in *The Far East*) says that no one but a traveller knows the value of tea. I can endorse that remark from my limited experience. Until I went to Kashmir I had no idea of its value. I was under the impression that cocoa and milk was one of the most sustaining things I could take, and during the earlier marches, when going to Bāltistān, I used up several tins at chota hāzri and breakfast. I occasionally varied cocoa with tea, and began to find that when I drank tea I was fitter and could walk better than when I took cocoa. It was particularly noticeable in the difference between the walk in the forenoon and that in the afternoon. At first I almost always took cocoa at chota hāzri, and usually tea at breakfast, and

was generally much more tired when I sat down for the mid-day meal than when I reached the halting-place at night. I could not at first account for this, and then it occurred to me to try tea at the early meal. I did so, and noticed the difference at once, as I never again found the morning walk tire me more than the one in the afternoon. I accordingly gave up cocoa altogether. Ever since I have been a firm believer in the great value of tea as a sustainer when much physical work has to be done, and a reviver when the frame is very tired.

Liquor is a matter of personal liking. I carried three bottles of whisky all round Bāltistān with me, and never drank a drop. In Ladāk I occasionally took some at dinner, but as I dislike whisky and water this was not often. It is well, however, in case of accidents to carry some, and also a little brandy. A small flask of the latter should invariably, in my opinion, accompany the sportsman in his brief bag. I was never without it, though, as it happened, I only touched it once.

V.—Kitchen Utensils

Kitchen utensils, fortunately, need not be numerous, but one or two things should be remembered. One is, that the Kashmiris and coolies between them will break everything that they can. The cook, to save himself trouble, will pack anyhow, without the slightest consideration of what an article will stand and what it will not. Consequently everything should be as strong as it can be made. The other thing to remember is, that the

Kashmiri, like other natives of India, is a slave to prejudices, and that it is rarely of any use trying to run counter to them; that is, the game is not worth the candle. For instance, he will not use a Warren's cooking-pot if he can help it. I had one, which Ramzāna succeeded in breaking almost immediately after I started for Bāltistān.

But on one point his prejudices must be fought against, whatever the cost. He likes best of all cooking in a copper vessel called a degchi, the inside of which has been whitened with a solder-like substance called kalai. This wears off, and cannot be renewed away from Srinagar, unless perhaps in Leh, and the result is copper poisoning to the European stomach. The sportsman should refuse absolutely to have any of his cooking-vessels made of copper. A nest of saucepans, fitting into each other, made of block tin, was what I used when my Warren's cooking-pot was destroyed. I had to obtain them from Rawal Pindi, as they were not to be bought in Srinagar. These saucepans can now be obtained of aluminium, and must be a great improvement on the old kind.

The list given by K. C. A. J. is ample, but I would, as in the matter of stores, venture to suggest certain changes.

The Warren's cooking-pot I would leave out for the reasons given above. The gridiron, too, is useless, unless a man wishes to cook his own dinner. The Kashmiri simply will not use it while he has a frying-pan by.

Then I would add the following:—

1 English tiffin basket, fitted for two if the sportsman is alone, and for four if he is accompanied by his wife.
2 enamelled iron jam-pots with close-fitting covers.
1 soldier's canteen.
1 small kettle in which tea can be made (to be carried in the tiffin basket).
2 small tin pie-dishes.
2 iron enamel-ware hot-water plates.

The English tiffin basket will be found a great convenience as already stated. Those fitted for one person have not, I think, quite enough things, and it is difficult to carry sufficient food in one of them. If the sportsman is alone the basket should be fitted for two, if accompanied by his wife, for four. This gives some spare utensils, and also room for food. The basket should carry a kettle and a tea infuser. I always had the kettle of water brought to me boiling, and dropped the infuser in myself, taking it out a couple of minutes after. This saved the necessity of a teapot separate from the kettle, and prevented the tea from becoming ruined by tannin, as happens if the leaves are left in too long.

The jam-pots are wanted to carry the jam in when emptied out of the tins in which it is bought. The tiffin basket, slung on the coolie's shoulders, gets turned any side up, and once a tin of jam has been opened, its contents cannot be carried unless emptied into a jam-pot such as I have mentioned. They are obtainable at Treacher's in Bombay.

The soldier's canteen has been already described.

The pie-dishes are wanted for puddings.

The hot-water plates are a great comfort, as without them the food congeals long before it can be eaten, when, as is often the case, the temperature of the tent is below freezing-point.

VI.—Clothes

The clothes required are mainly warm things, and the list of those actually necessary is a very short one. I took too much, I found, and if going again on a three months' trip I should be content with the following :—

* 2 suits consisting of Norfolk jacket and knickers.
1 Cardigan jacket.
3 flannel shirts.
12 pairs socks.
3 pairs putties.
2 deerstalker cloth caps with flaps.
* 1 cloth hat.
1 sola topi (hat of sola pith).
24 pocket handkerchiefs.
2 pairs knitted woollen gloves.
* 2 pairs fur-lined gloves.
* 6 pairs knitted or 12 pairs puttoo thread inner socks for grass shoes.
*12 pairs quilted outer socks for grass shoes.
2 pairs shooting boots.
* 2 pairs chaplis with nails.
* 4 pairs cowhide socks for chaplis.
* 1 pair long puttoo boots.
1 overcoat.
2 Jaeger night-caps.
3 Jaeger vests.
1 leather belt.
1 waterproof cape.
2 suits woollen night-things.
2 pairs woollen drawers.
2 pairs blue goggles.

N.B.—The articles marked with an asterisk are best obtained at Srinagar.

The suits should be of a sort of slate-gray colour. On the right breast of the coat should be a pocket fitted to hold ten Lee-Metford cartridges. The pockets should be roomy, and the openings of the lower ones should come well below the belt. They should be provided with flaps to button down so as to keep out rain and snow. Besides the ordinary two large pockets of the knickers, a small one should be put in at the edge near the top front button, as is usually done in riding breeches, so that in rain the watch can be put in here and partially protected from the weather. Excellent

suits of the kind described can be quickly made up in Srinagar of puttoo, the warm locally-made woollen material already mentioned. I paid Rs.9 for a suit of this kind, which was ordered one day at noon and completed by the following evening.

The Cardigan jacket is most useful. It can be put on when starting, and then, if the day gets warm, can be taken off and handed to a coolie to carry. In great cold, or when without a tent, it is often well to sleep in it. I wore mine every night when marching from Skardo to Haramosh.

The socks may be woollen or merino, as the sportsman fancies, but some, at least, should be light, to prevent the feet getting too hot, especially when marching in the Indus valley. I used merino socks almost entirely.

Putties, or woollen bandages for winding round the legs from ankle to knee, are generally considered superior to long stockings for rough work. These things can be locally bought if required. I used serge putties from the Woollen Mills, Cawnpore.

A double cloth hat, of slate-gray colour, very useful in Bāltistān, is to be bought in Srinagar from one of the tailors. In Ladāk the sun is so powerful that a regular Indian hat[1] of sola pith is necessary.

The woollen gloves can be worn when the weather is not cold enough for those fur-lined. The latter soon make the hands too hot except when a cold wind is blowing. It will be found convenient to start with fur-lined gloves, and change to the woollen ones as the day goes on. The fur gloves should be lined with lamb

[1] Procurable at almost any Indian station.

skin. In a strong cold wind nothing else will keep the hands warm.

The socks for grass shoes (both inner and outer) wear out very fast, and a liberal supply should be taken. They are required everywhere but in Ladāk. The inner ones, made of puttoo thread, are particularly short-lived, so knitted ones made of good wool should, if possible, be bought. My wife got me a couple of pairs of these from a man who lived in Srinagar close to the first bridge over the Jhelum. Outer socks, unquilted, are obtainable, but they are not nearly so comfortable or as lasting as those I have mentioned.

The shooting boots should fit well and be easy, and should be furnished with nails. I like ice-screws best, and always used them, as, until much worn, they give a better grip on rock than any other kind. The boots will only be worn when marching, and two pairs, with chaplis to change into, should be ample for a three months' trip after ibex or markhor. In Ladāk they would be used always, and more might be necessary, so that there, perhaps, the usual estimate of a pair a month would not be too much. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the sportsman can get about almost everywhere on a pony when in Ladāk; indeed can, in some cases, almost do his stalks on a pony, so that the wear and tear of shoe-leather need not necessarily be great. One gentleman I knew, though quite lame and unable to move without having his knee tightly bandaged, contrived to do a large amount of shooting in Ladāk by free use of ponies. He never walked at all till within two or three hundred yards of his game. How he contrived to get so

near with a pony I never could quite make out, but that he did manage it somehow was evident from the bag of *Ovis ammon*, burhel, antelope, and gazelle which he brought back.

Chaplis, the leather sandals of Kashmir, are cooler and lighter than shooting boots, and are often a pleasant change. As noted above, I found it a good plan, when marching, to wear boots until breakfast, and then change into chaplis for the afternoon. They are not good things to use in wet, or when on gravel, sand, or loose stones. In wet the foot slides about too much, and on gravel small stones get in between the foot and the sole. Chamois leather socks can be had, but they are of little use, as they wear through very fast. It is best to get all of cow-hide.

The long puttoo boots are a great comfort to change into after a day's work in cold weather, as they keep the feet and legs very warm.

The overcoat is largely a matter of taste. In Bāltistān I never wore it at all, as when it got dusk I always went to bed. In Ladāk it was undoubtedly useful after dinner on cold nights, and in Srinagar when we got back in October. If I were going again alone I should not take one; otherwise I think I should.

The kind of leather belt I found most useful was made in three pieces of double leather, $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide, connected by two brass rings, each 2 inches in diameter. The rings were 16 inches apart, a distance which brought them comfortably to the sides of the hips. The advantage of rings is that they allow of freer play of the body than if the belt is one continuous strip of leather. An ordinary buckle and tongue of brass formed the fastening in front.

I carried, in case of accident, a second belt of this description, but I never had occasion to use it.

The waterproof cape is light, occupies little space, and is useful to sit down on when the grass is wet. In slight showers, too, it keeps the shoulders dry, but in heavy rain the water pours off so (unless one is sitting down) on to the knees of the knickers and cuffs of the coat, that I doubt if there is any advantage in then wearing a cape. Ordinarily it would be carried by the tiffin coolie.

The goggles used should not be the locally-made kind given to the servants. Very fair blue spectacles can be bought at many of the Calcutta shops at R.1 a pair. These answer satisfactorily. They are only wanted in snow, or, as in Changchenmo, when there is much wind, glare, or dust. The steel rims of the wire gauze should be bound over with woollen yarn.

As the things required for the servants are mainly clothes, it would be as well to enumerate here what are wanted. Servants brought from elsewhere, if not already provided with woollen clothing, will require it, as well as a lui each, and some warm socks. The shikāri will ask for a suit, chaplis, and leather socks for himself and the cook, and also for the chota shikāri, if one is taken. For a three months' trip where, as in Bāltistān, grass shoes will be largely used, I would allow the articles entered below, which are all obtainable in Srinagar :—

For Shikāri

1 suit.
1 lui or Kashmir blanket.
1 pair woollen gloves.
12 pairs quilted socks for grass shoes.
2 pairs chaplis, with nails.
2 pairs cow-hide socks for chaplis.
1 pair goggles (local make).
2 pairs puttoo socks.

For cook

1 suit.	2 pairs cow-hide socks for chaplis.
1 lui.	1 pair goggles (local make).
2 pairs chaplis, with nails.	2 pairs puttoo socks.

For each permanent coolie

2 pairs chaplis, with nails.	1 pair goggles (local make).

Extra, in case of accident

6 pairs puttoo outer socks for grass shoes.	3 pairs chaplis, with nails.
3 pairs puttoo socks.	3 pairs cow-hide socks for chaplis.
	3 pairs goggles (local make).

The servants should be required to mend their socks and chaplis as far as possible, and not to fling them away the moment they begin to show signs of wear. The suits may be obtained ready-made sometimes, and if not, they can be made up in the course of a day.

The goggles are required for the servants and permanent coolies when travelling over snow, as without them snow blindness is certain. The men to whom they are given should be warned that if, after getting the goggles, they become snow-blind, it will be their own fault, and they will in that case be left behind at the first village. One of my permanent coolies was attacked by this malady—almost certainly owing to some carelessness of his own—and I very foolishly allowed him a pony to ride all the way from Hardās to Skardo. I ought instead to have left him behind, as he had received his goggles like the rest, and if he had used them regularly he could not have suffered.

CHAPTER XXVII

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES

Waterproof valise—Mattress—Sleeping bag—Strip of waterproof sheeting—Repairing bag—Knives—Adze—Axe—Spring balance—Binoculars—Telescope—Barometer and thermometer—Buckets—Rope—Lantern—Saddlery—Brief bag—Lui—Chargal—Mussuk—Shikāri's belt—Camera—Jhārans—Stores box—Napkins—White numdah—Mail bag—Alpenstock—Stationery—Maps—Yākdāns—Kiltas—Medicines—Prices of Srinagar articles.

VII.—Miscellaneous

The miscellaneous articles which a sportsman would find useful have many of them been mentioned already. The following list completes, I think, the number, supposing him to be alone. Very little more would be required if he were accompanied by his wife :—

1 waterproof valise to hold bedding.
1 cork or other mattress.
4 blankets 6½ feet by 5 feet.
*1 sleeping-bag lined with sheepskin.
2 pillows.
1 brown waterproof sheet, large, and of strongest make.
1 thin strip of waterproof to go round bedding.
2 broad straps, with buckles, for bedding.
1 repairing bag, containing :—2 shoemaker's awls, cobbler's wax, strong thread, housewife (with pincushion, ordinary needles, darning needles, strong cotton, darning yarn, buttons of all kinds on clothes, scissors, penknife, button-hook), small hand-vice, pair of pliers, hammer wrench, wire nails, brad-awl, wire.

4 skinning knives.
*1 single blade hunting-knife.
1 *multum in parvo* knife.
2 common pocket-knives.
2 triangular files.
1 adze.
*1 axe.
1 Salter's spring balance weighing to 200 lbs.
2 pairs first-class binoculars.
1 powerful telescope.
1 pocket aneroid barometer.
1 maximum and minimum thermometer, with horseshoe magnet, in travelling case.
1 pocket sun-dial.
*2 water buckets.
1 best English rope, 100 feet long.
1 camp lantern to take candles.
1 pair wooden candlesticks.
1 lot English saddlery, including saddle, bridle, and martingale.
1 brief bag.
*1 lui or Kashmir blanket.
1 chargal (small water-skin).
*1 mussuk (large water-skin).
*1 belt, with pouch, for shikāri.
1 photographic camera.
3 dozen jhārans (kitchen cloths).
1 stores box, containing tins for stores in use.
2 large bath towels.
3 small towels.
6 table-napkins.
1 small brandy flask.
*1 white numdah.
*1 mail bag.
*2 pair tent-pole hooks.
*1 alpenstock.
Pens, ink, pencils, rubber, and paper (including blotting-paper).
1 Letts's Diary, No. 30, interleaved with blotting-paper.
Maps of the country to be shot over.
*Yākdāns (mule trunks).
Medicines.

N.B.—Articles procurable in Kashmir are marked with an asterisk.

A waterproof valise of some kind is essential, and K. C. A. J. recommends a Wolseley valise. I have never tried one, and cannot speak as to its merits. The article I used was the shape and size of a roll of bedding, made of waterproof canvas, and fastened by broad leather straps. It was fairly good, but not altogether satisfactory, as it was troublesome getting the bedding in, and it would not always hold everything. The Wolseley valises are, I believe, provided with a cork mattress. This, no doubt, would be useful when sleeping on the ground. K. C. A. J. recommends a resai or cotton padded quilt. I had, and found very comfortable,

a mattress I got made myself. I bought three red woollen blankets, $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 5 feet, from the Elgin Mills, Cawnpore, and doubling each lengthways, had them quilted strongly together one on top of another. The result was a warm but thin mattress, of six folds of blanketing, $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the exact size of the Elliott camp bed. The only objections to it were its weight and want of flexibility, and in consequence of these, and because I had a white numdah to put on the floor of my tent and a bag to sleep in, I did not take it when camping in the nalas near Sarsal. It was found most useful, however, in Ladāk, and if I were going shooting in the Himalayas again, I should certainly take a mattress of the kind, only I should have it made of two blankets instead of three.

The sleeping-bag is rather a luxury than a necessity. It is useful in allowing of a smaller supply of blankets being taken, and is not as bulky as these in proportion to its warmth. The price will vary with its quality, and the credulity of the purchaser. When I was buying one, the maker put down the price at Rs. 35. On my showing his account to Captain Merewether, my friend remarked that the price seemed higher than he had himself paid, and asked the man to show him his own account. With some reluctance that worthy turned back to Captain Merewether's bill, and there we found that Rs. 28 was the correct price for an article similar to what I was getting.

Whatever style of valise is adopted, it is most important to see that the bedding does not get wet. To insure this, I always had a separate strip of waterproof sheeting, which was rolled round the bedding and

strapped on before it was put into the valise. Without this precaution my bedding would have got very wet on the 31st of March, when we marched in falling snow from Machahoi to Drās, and again on the 22nd of May, when we all got soaked on the hillside above the Kutyal nala. This is why I have mentioned separately in the list the strip of waterproof sheeting and the straps for the bedding. These articles will be put round the bedding before it is transferred to the valise, which, of course, is itself waterproof, as well as provided with its own straps outside.

The repairing bag will be found of much value. It will often be necessary to stitch up a rip in a chapli, or to mend a strap which has given way. A cork on the business end of each awl will keep it from running into things it is not intended to penetrate. Darning needles and yarn are most useful. Where so much work falls on the feet as in Kashmir, it is important to attend to them carefully, and see that they are not chafed by holes in the socks. I became comparatively expert at darning my socks by the time I reached Leh. The tools mentioned come in very handy. Hinges get broken, nails and screws twisted, tongues of buckles bent, kiltā chains injured, etc. It is very little trouble putting these things straight, with the few tools mentioned, but without them very often nothing could be done. I have included a spare file and pocket-knife in the list, because the accidental loss of either would be a serious inconvenience. The file is specially required for rounding the noses of those Lee-Metford cartridges which have truncated bullets, and for this purpose should

always be at hand in the brief bag. The pocket-knife I like best is that obtainable at the Army and Navy Stores for 3s. 4d. It contains, in a metal handle, one blade, one button-hook, one champagne opener, and one corkscrew. This knife I habitually carried in my pocket.

The best skinning knives are, I think, the common butcher's knives to be bought in England for sixpence a-piece. An edge should be put on the back in Kashmir, half the way up from the point. Leather sheaths, with a loop for the belt, can be made for these in Srinagar, or the shikāri will make them for himself with a bit of sheepskin, as Abdulla did. The shikāri and tiffin coolie should each carry one knife, so that, when an animal is shot, the hide may be got off as quickly as possible. If a third man is available to help, the sportsman can lend one of the knives he carries himself.

The hunting knife may be of any pattern which pleases him best, but it is not, as far as my experience goes, of much use, and I gave up taking mine.

Far better was the *multum in parvo* knife I carried in a leather case swung on my belt. This had been specially made to my order by Messrs. John Round and Son of Sheffield, and contained the following things in an aluminium handle :—

1 large blade.
1 small ,,
1 saw.
1 triangular borer.
1 tin opener.
1 pair scissors.
1 button-hook.
1 universal cartridge extractor.
1 corkscrew.
1 file and small turnscrew.
1 champagne opener.
1 gimlet.
1 gun-pick.
1 bodkin.
1 pair tweezers.
1 large turnscrew.

This knife weighed half an ounce over one pound, was six inches long, and had a ring for attachment to a chain if necessary.

The adze will be found most useful in making ground level for the tent, where such an operation is found necessary. Care should be taken that the head is broad and flat at the back, and without the projecting spur-like knob so often put on. The knob is shown in the illustration in K. C. A. J.'s book, and renders the adze nearly useless for driving in tent-pegs.

An axe is required for cutting firewood, and can be bought in Srinagar. This implement, as well as the adze, should never be carried by any coolie except one of the permanent men. Anything of iron is of great value away from Srinagar, and the usual method of theft is for a coolie to conceal, while on the march, the article he covets, reporting when he gets in that it fell out of his load. It is no use to fine him, as the amount of his hire is much less than the article is worth. Whether fined or not he is content, for on his way back he takes it out of its place of concealment and goes home rejoicing.

The Salter's spring balance I had with me came in useful on more than one occasion, in settling disputes with coolies as to the weight of loads, and in showing what men, if any, were shirking their work. The sportsman can also weigh himself with it occasionally, and see whether he is keeping in proper condition or not.

Good binoculars are most important, and there should be two pair, one for the sportsman himself, and one for the shikāri. I had at starting one good pair and one

ordinary pair, and regretted that both were not of the best quality. I had no telescope, but immediately I reached the ground, I saw that even the better binoculars were not good enough, and wrote for another glass. I was sent an article priced at Rs.120 at the shop in Calcutta, and this was a great improvement on what I had, but even it was hardly powerful enough. If I were going again, I would take two really expensive binoculars and one first-class telescope. These are articles on which it is true economy to spend money freely. The binoculars are required to search a hillside thoroughly for game, and when its presence has been detected, the telescope comes in to show whether it is worth pursuing or not. The telescope, with its small field, would pass by much game which the binocular reveals. That is why the latter is required for the preliminary search. But the powerful glass shows the size of the horns, and enables the sportsman to decide whether he will go in pursuit or not. If I had had a telescope on the 19th of May, the ibex shot that day would not have been touched. Binocular telescopes, small enough for the pocket, and yet of great power, are to be had, which would be just the thing for a sportsman to keep always by him. I much regretted not taking a pair.

A pocket barometer is very convenient for giving one an idea of the height, and a maximum and minimum thermometer is also interesting. A small thermometer, in a folding case, which I carried in the brief bag, was what I used when I was too lazy to take out and hang up the larger instrument. The latter should be pro-

vided with a wooden travelling case, which mine had not.

The pocket sun-dial will be found very useful, if the watch goes out of order or stops, as mine did more than once.

Water buckets can be very cheaply made by putting iron handles to kerosine oil tins. A rim of iron should go round the top of the tin to add to its strength before the handle is fastened on. Water for a hot bath can be conveniently boiled in one of these, and one filled with cold water should always stand in the bathroom of the Kashmir tent.

I had no rope with me, and as it happened did not require one. But I think it ought to be carried in Bāltistān, as in places the ground is dangerous. A fall into a crevasse on a glacier, would probably have fatal results, if no rope were obtainable from the camp.

A camp lantern to take candles is very necessary, although, when a man is by himself, it is not much required. Ordinarily a pair of wooden candlesticks, of the saucer-shaped kind that screw into one another, is sufficient, as these stand on the box beside the bed where there is seldom wind. They can be bought in most places in India for eight or twelve annas a pair, but a better kind, made of brass, can be got from Sunder Lal of Agra, and probably elsewhere. Occasionally, however, the sportsman is sleeping out, or cannot keep the wind out of his tent. In such cases, one, or it may be two, lanterns are required. They should be made to fit into a box, and when used should be opened and packed by the owner himself. If this precaution is not taken,

the glass will inevitably be broken, or the lantern otherwise damaged. The box should carry a couple of spare panes of glass, to replace probable breakages. A tin box to fit into the lantern when packed, and to carry a few candles, is convenient. The lantern should rarely, if ever, be allowed in the kitchen. Kashmiris are accustomed to work by firelight, and though they will, of course, use candles if allowed, they do not really require them. I told my men they could have a small lamp, and buy oil locally for themselves if they wanted to, but they never took the trouble to do this, and as they had no candles, they worked all through by firelight. The candles should be kept by the sportsman in his own charge, as their loss would be a serious misfortune.

A lady must, of course, take her own saddle, as nothing of the kind is locally procurable. A man should also, I think, take an English saddle, as the discomfort of riding in the thing that Kashmiris and Ladākis use is often very great. Generally the pommel is too high, and the distance from pommel to cantle too short. Occasionally there are no stirrups, or only a single stirrup. In any case a small bridle and standing martingale are very necessary, as the things supplied with the ponies are generally rotten. The standing martingale will be found specially useful, as most of the ponies have a horrid habit of chucking up their heads the moment the reins are pulled. They then, of course, cannot see where they are going, and a bad accident might very easily occur. On one occasion my wife, when riding to Leh, thoughtlessly put up her umbrella, without having ascertained beforehand whether the pony would stand it or not.

The pony was startled, and promptly bolted, but as my wife was using her own bridle with English reins, she quickly pulled the animal up. The reins would probably have come away in her hands, if they had been the usual kind hired out with these ponies. More than once I have seen the bit fall out of the animal's mouth, owing to the string headstall breaking.

A bag of the size and shape of a brief bag keeps very conveniently together the small things that are constantly required. It would contain ordinarily such articles as writing materials, newspapers, flask, chess-board, twine, file, spare cartridges, etc., which the sportsman may want to take out with him daily. It is light, and can easily be carried by the tiffin coolie.

The lui is, I think, a necessity. The tiffin coolie carries in it the tiffin-basket, brief bag, camera, etc., and it is pleasant to sit on during the mid-day halts.

The chargal is a leather bag with a brass nozzle, in which drinking water for the day can be carried, in places where it is not readily or everywhere found. If the sportsman takes it new into the country, and does not himself put his mouth to the nozzle, his shikāri and coolies will use the water it contains, which will save the necessity of taking another supply for them. The Kashmiri, like most low-bred and ignorant Mahomedans, is almost as particular in the matter of ceremonial uncleanness as a Hindu. The contrast in this respect between him and a Yarkandi trader, also a Mahomedan, who will drink tea with a European out of the European's own cup, is most marked.

The mussuk is a large water-skin to fetch water in

for the camp, when the spring is some distance from the tents.

The shikāri should have a belt, provided with a pouch, in which he could carry a couple of spare packets of ammunition. With 10 cartridges in the magazine, 10 in his coat, and 20 with the shikāri, the sportsman would have more than he could possibly use in a single outing.

In these days, when every one is more or less of a photographer, the sportsman will probably want a camera of some kind. He should certainly take one, as the additional weight involved is nothing, and the pleasure of having a sort of pictorial diary of his wanderings will afterwards be very great. There is an immense variety to choose from, and I am not competent to venture on advice in the matter. I may mention, however, that I used an Eastman's No. 5 Folding Kodak, taking pictures 5 by 7, and provided with a Roll holder for films. Three spools of 96 negatives, which I exposed in Bāltistān, and which were developed afterwards in London, proved, almost without exception, failures, some owing to over exposure in the clear air of the Highlands I was working in, and some to other causes. I exposed about two more spools before leaving Kashmir, and altogether got about 50 pictures, which I am glad to possess. The illustrations in this book were all reproduced, by an automatic process, from photographs which I took with the camera mentioned above. A developing outfit should, I think, also be taken, so that the sportsman may ascertain whether he is working right or not. The atmosphere of the Highlands of Kashmir differs so much from that of the plains of India, or other places not much

above the sea, that it is very easy to go wrong about the time of exposure, and the correct stop to use. I should have done much better, if I had developed some of my negatives before leaving the places in which they had been exposed.

Jhārans, or kitchen cloths, are a source of much trouble. It is quite impossible to get a Kashmiri cook to keep them clean, and it is out of the question for the sportsman to look into the matter to any extent himself. The only possible way that I know of to ensure some degree of cleanliness, is to occasionally visit the kitchen, and make a bad row if dirty jhārans are in use. If this is done at reasonably frequent intervals, some effect will be produced, and the cook will be deterred from straining the soup through a jhāran which is black from rubbing out a greasy saucepan. A lady can partially insure cleanliness, by taking in the soiled jhārans every day and giving out clean ones. It is a matter of some importance, as cleanliness and health are closely connected, and the Kashmiri is, without exception, the dirtiest servant I have yet seen. The washing of jhārans should be made the daily duty of the permanent coolie who helps in the kitchen.

My box, containing the tins for stores in daily use, had a padlock, and was of great service. In it I kept my tea and sugar while in Bāltistān, and my tea, sugar, figs, butter, and cheese when I went to Hanlè and Traal. It is necessary to keep tea and sugar locked up when the Kashmiri is about, as he is particularly partial to both, and it is a serious matter if either of these necessaries runs short, where, as in Bāltistān, it is impossible to make

good the loss without sending to Srinagar. The box was obtained from Mr. Luscombe of Allahabad, and contained originally six tins. I had one of these replaced by two tins, each of half its size, which was an improvement, but none of the covers of the tins fitted tight enough to keep the contents quite secure. This is a matter which should be seen to when starting.

The table-napkins occupy little space, and make a great difference. My wife brought table-cloths and sheets, but a sportsman alone does not need these things.

The white numdah is a comfort on the floor of the tent, and helps to make it look bright and clean. If the sportsman sleeps on the ground it is pleasant under his bed. If he does not, it is pleasant to his bare feet when he gets up.

The mail-bag is required for the coolie sent to the post-office, and tends to save loss from careless carrying. The Kashmiri is essentially slipshod, and would think nothing of dropping an odd letter or two. A bag minimises the risk of this.

Tent-pole hooks are an absolute essential.

The alpenstock is most useful. Its value is increased, if a hole be made a couple of inches from the end of the handle, and a loop of leather large enough to go round the wrist run through. In many places it is necessary to employ the hands to get along at all, and it is a great convenience then to be able to sling the long stick on the wrist, and have it thus temporarily out of the way. K. C. A. J. says it should not be shod with iron. Mine always was, and by taking the precaution to reverse it

when near game, I prevented any danger of the clinking sound that might have revealed my presence.

Ink I carried in a stone bottle in the kiltā with the stores, but I had a small supply in my brief bag, in a square leather-covered travelling ink-bottle with double top. A string attached to the little handle, and tied round this ink-bottle, prevented all danger of its opening by accidental pressure on the spring. I always used Swan Fountain pens, and carried one in the brief bag, and one in a receptacle made for it in the breast pocket of my jacket. A common cork, with a hole large enough for the pen, driven through it lengthways, and then thinned a little with a pen-knife, makes a pleasant hold for the fingers, and prevents them from being inked. Writing-paper and blotting-paper were also carried in the brief bag, and notes of what occurred could thus be jotted down while everything was fresh in the memory.

The Letts's Diary recommended will be found a very convenient size.

Good maps of the area to be shot over are most necessary. The best for Kashmir are the sheets of the Atlas of India, which are on the scale of 4 miles to the inch. It is well to get an index map first, and pick out from this the particular sheets that are required. These should be obtained, for convenience sake, folded up and bound in cloth boards. Messrs. Thacker, Spink, and Co. of Calcutta supplied mine in this shape. As far as possible the maps should be in quarter sheets. On the outside of each it is well to paste a slip of paper showing what quarter sheet it is, and the principal places that are shown on it. This saves much trouble in hunt-

ing for particular sheets. For instance, on the outside of Quarter Sheet No. 45, S.E., I wrote as follows :—

Q. S. 45, S.E.—Leh, Tankse.

The sheets required for Kashmir, with the principal places shown on each, are given below :—

Sheet 28.—The valley of Kashmir, showing Mozuffarabād, the Borzil, the Zogi Lā, and Islāmabād.
Sheet 45.—Drās, Kargil, Lāmāyuru, Leh, and the Nubra valley.
Sheet 46.—Zāskar and the Tso Morari Lake.
Q. Sheet 27, N.E.—Haramosh.
Q. Sheet 27, S.E.—Skardo, Rondu, and Astor.
Q. Sheet 44, S.W.—Parkatta and the Shyok river.
Q. Sheet 63, N.W.—The Lingzingthan plains.
Q. Sheet 63, S.W.—Changchenmo.
Q. Sheet 64, N.W.—Rupshu and Rudok.
Q. Sheet 64, S.W.—Hanlè.

In addition I would recommend the Route Map for the Western Himalayas, published by the Survey of India, and also obtainable from Messrs. Thacker, Spink, and Co.

The best boxes in which to carry one's things when travelling in Kashmir are, I think, yākdāns or mule trunks. These can be procured in Srinagar cheaper probably than they can be bought elsewhere. I took a number made at Cawnpore into the country with me, and paid much more for them than if I had bought them locally. They are generally provided with two strong rings near the hinges, so that a pair can be roped together and hung one on each side of a pony's back. Mine were all so furnished, yet, such is the perversity of human nature, I do not think I ever saw the rings used by any pony owner or yāk driver for the purpose for which they were intended. Care should be taken to see that

handles, clamps, and padlock hasps, are rivetted right through the sides of the box to the inside and not merely fastened by screws. Mine were fastened by screws, and a lot came off in transit. What the Kashmiris will ask their employer to get is the kiltā. These are leather-covered baskets about 2 feet high and 12 or 15 inches in diameter, shaped something like old earthenware jars. I took a number of these and was very sorry that I did so. They proved clumsy to carry, held little owing to their awkward shape, could never be safely locked, and wore out exceedingly fast. We used the kiltās for stores and kitchen things only. The lids were fastened to the body of the kiltā by small chains, which were continually giving way and rendering the padlocks useless. This fact, coupled with their general untidiness, no doubt endeared them to my Kashmiris. If going again, I should use locally-made yākdāns exclusively in place of kiltās.

The list of medicines given by K. C. A. J. is a very good one, but if I were fitting out for an expedition myself I should make one or two changes in it. Instead of vaseline I should take vinolia cream (about four tins), and I should have the quinine made up into three-grain pills. I should omit the pain-killer, court and soap plaster, scales and glass measure, and add a couple of bottles of jwāri hāri. This last is a first-class tonic and febrifuge, and particularly useful for servants. A man often comes up shivering, and says he has fever and is feeling wrong, has a headache, etc. The chances are he has had a chill, or else is merely wanting to shirk. In either case a dose of jwāri hāri can do no

harm. If he has had a chill it will probably put him right. If there is nothing wrong it will not affect him. For wounds, the best thing is probably Johnson and Seabury's rubber adhesive plaster, of which a small supply might be found useful. A couple of rolls of bandages should also be included, as well as a two-ounce bottle of Friar's balsam.

For articles procurable in Srinagar I give below the correct prices, as far as I have been able to ascertain them. It must, however, be remembered that I may have been misled, and that the prices I am giving are above what is right. Where it is the interest of every one to deceive the stranger, and the business of each one to loot him, it is very difficult to ascertain prices correctly. It may, however, be accepted that no rates I have mentioned are ever too low. The error, if there is one, is entirely the other way, and any one who cares to take trouble about the matter, and has the time to bargain and to visit more than one shop, will obtain a very sensible reduction on the prices I have shown.

	Rs.	a.	p.
Inner socks of puttoo thread for grass shoes, per dozen	3	0	0
Quilted outer socks, with cotton laces, for grass shoes, per dozen	12	0	0
Unquilted outer socks, for grass shoes, per dozen	6	0	0
Goggles for servants, per dozen	3	0	0
Lui or Kashmir blanket, each	5	0	0
Sheepskin sleeping-bag, each from Rs.20 to	28	0	0
Large white numdahs, each	2	8	0
Puttoo suit (coat and knickers) for servant, with puttoo lining, from Rs.5 to	7	0	0
Fur gloves, per pair	1	0	0
Chaplis, with nails, per pair	1	8	0

	Rs.	a.	p.
Chamois leather socks, per pair	0	6	0
Cowhide leather socks, per pair	1	0	0
Puttoo boots, to reach over knee, per pair	7	0	0
Round leather-covered tiffin basket, with lid, each	1	0	0
Leather mail-bag, each	2	8	0
Strap, with hooks, for tent pole, each	0	4	0
Mussuk, each	3	0	0
Kiltā, each	2	8	0
Yākdān (mule-trunk), each	8	0	0
Hunting knife, with spring in sheath, each	3	0	0
Iron-shod alpenstock, each	0	12	0
Axe, each	1	0	0
Puttoo suit (coat and knickers) for sportsman, each	9	0	0
Cloth double hat, each	3	0	0
Woollen gloves, per pair	0	8	0

CHAPTER XXVIII

CURING OF SKINS AND CLEANING OF SKULLS

Consignments sent in —Charges made by skinman—Charges actually paid —Best way of dealing with skins.

THERE are several men who do curing of skins in Srinagar, and there is no business in which the looting of the stranger is more systematically carried on there than in this. I was recommended, when leaving for Bāltistān, to send my skins and heads to a particular man in Srinagar, and I accordingly sent him five consignments. Part of the time that I was shooting in Bāltistān, Sarsal was where the Cabul tent and things I did not want with me were kept. Then on the 24th of April the headquarters were transferred to Honuspa. When I went into the Khaltar nala, on the 8th of May, the Cabul tent and other things were moved to Darsu, where they stayed till I passed through on my way to Sarsal on the 6th of June. As the heads and skins were obtained I kept sending them down to the headquarters' camp, and letting them accumulate there. As mentioned above, the first consignment was despatched to Srinagar on the 15th of May; the second was sent in with the boats on the 27th of June; the third was

despatched from Pobrang on the 6th of September; the fourth I took in myself when I reached Srinagar on the 17th of October, and the last consisted of the bear-skin and stag's head brought in from Traal on the 11th of November. With each instructions were sent to the skinman indicating what was to be done; some of the skins were to be cured; a couple of ibex heads and the markhor head set up, and all the skulls carefully cleaned.

As far as I could judge by the appearance when I reached Srinagar, the curing of the skins and the cleaning of the skulls had been well done. Of course it was impossible to say then how the work would last, or whether salt had been used in working the skins or not. But as far as it was possible at the time to tell, the skins were in fairly good order, and the heads reasonably clean. The setting up with glass eyes was, however, a failure, and I was very sorry I had ordered it to be done. This kind of work cannot be carried out properly in Srinagar, and valuable trophies should, I think, be sent home to England. I had eventually to get Mr. Rowland Ward to remodel the heads that had been done in Srinagar. All those, illustrations of which appear in this book, were done by him.

I had given the skinman from time to time advances in part payment of the work he was doing, and had more than once told him to let me know what his charges were. This he never would do, saying that he would submit a single account when all the work was done. In the meantime he kept on importuning for money. When, however, I found that the sum I had advanced came to Rs.131.8.0 I thought it was time to stop; so I told him I would pay no more till he finished the work, and

brought everything to the house-boat for my inspection. In the meantime I consulted some old residents of Srinagar, and obtained from them a list of the prices that ought to be paid. When everything was ready I had a field-day with the skin-curer at the house-boat, examined the skins and horns, and went over his account item by item, settling, in accordance with the rates my friends had given me, what should be paid. The two accounts are given below. The first is an almost exact copy of the bill presented to me :—

The Skinman's Account

	Rs.	a.	p.
1 markhor stuffed with eyes . . .	10	0	0
3 ibex stuffing at Rs. 10	30	0	0
1 yāk head cleaning at Rs. 7 . . .	7	0	0
4 *Ovis ammon* cleaning at Rs. 5 . . .	20	0	0
1 shāpoo cleaning	5	0	0
3 nāpoo cleaning at Rs. 5 . . .	15	0	0
6 Tibetan antelope heads cleaning at Rs. 4 .	24	0	0
1 markhor head cleaning	5	0	0
9 ibex heads cleaning at Rs. 5 . . .	45	0	0
1 bārāsingh head cleaning . . .	5	0	0
3 goa heads cleaning at Rs. 5 . . .	15	0	0
1 body skin of yāk curing . . .	20	0	0
1 bear skin and head, set up with eyes and curing, etc.	15	0	0
1 black bear skin, curing	7	0	0
2 brown bear skins curing at Rs. 6 . .	12	0	0
2 bear heads cleaned at Rs. 3 . . .	6	0	0
1 markhor body skin curing . . .	5	0	0
8 body skins of ibex at Rs. 5 each cleaning .	40	0	0
1 skull skin of yāk curing . . .	5	0	0
4 *Ovis ammon* skull skins at Rs. 3 each . .	12	0	0
6 antelope skull skins at Rs. 3 each . .	18	0	0
3 goa skull skins at Rs. 2 each . . .	6	0	0
2 markhor skull skins at Rs. 3 each . .	6	0	0
Carry forward . . .	333	0	0

	Rs.	a.	p.
Brought forward	333	0	0
7 ibex skull skins cleaning at Rs.3 each	21	0	0
1 bārāsingh skull skin cleaning	3	0	0
8 small skins of all	2	0	0
4 hoofs kyang	1	0	0
Repair to horn tips and head of ibex	2	8	0
4 bottles turpentine used for the skins, which were kept under orders without cleaning or curing	8	0	0
2 kyang skins made leather at Rs.10 each	20	0	0
	390	8	0

Boxes

4 boxes at Rs.3 each	12	0	0
1 box	6	0	0
1 tin-lined box	5	0	0
1 tin-lined large box	10	0	0
1 box, wooden	2	0	0
1 box	2	8	0
	37	8	0
Grand total	428	0	0

Correct Account as actually paid

A. Trophies

Setting up 4 heads at Rs.3	12	0	0
Cleaning skulls of—			
1 yāk			
1 markhor			
9 ibex			
4 *Ovis ammon*			
6 Tibet antelope			
3 Tibet gazelle			
1 uryal			
3 burhel			
1 bārāsingh			
2 bears			
31 at Rs.1	31	0	0
Carry forward	43	0	0

	Rs.	a.	p.
Brought forward	43	0	0
Curing 2 small bear skins at Rs. 3	6	0	0
Curing 1 bear skin and setting up head	6	0	0
Curing one black bear skin	5	0	0
Curing yāk skin	10	0	0
Curing head skins of—			
1 yāk			
2 markhor			
7 ibex			
4 *Ovis hodgsoni*			
6 Tibet antelope			
3 Tibet gazelle			
3 burhel			
1 bārāsingh			
27 at R. 1	27	0	0
Curing body skins of—			
1 markhor			
3 ibex			
4 at Rs. 2	8	0	0
Curing 8 small skins	0	8	0
Cleaning 4 hoofs	0	8	0
Repairing horn tips	1	0	0
Keeping other skins	1	0	0
	108	0	0

B. Boxes

4 boxes for 4 heads	8	0	0
1 big box for horns	3	0	0
1 tin-lined box for head skins	5	0	0
1 wooden box for antelope horns	2	0	0
1 ditto for 6 ibex horns	2	0	0
1 large tin-lined box for bear skins	6	0	0
	26	0	0
Grand total	134	0	0
Paid in advance	131	8	0
Balance due	3	8	0

The prices I paid erred on the side of liberality, but in a country where there is no fixed scale of charges, and where the sum demanded for work of this kind varies directly with the credulity of the sportsman, it is not possible to avoid mistakes. Nevertheless, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the second of the above lists allows a fair price if the work be good, and should certainly not be exceeded.

As a general rule it is, I think, advisable to have cured at Srinagar the skins which the sportsman wishes to retain. He cannot well keep them with him, as his camp is constantly moving, and they would not only add a good deal to the expense of travelling, but would run the risk of being injured. The best plan is, I think, to store them at some convenient central place in the neighbourhood of the shooting ground, and when they have accumulated to any extent, to send a consignment into Srinagar. There, in the summer months, the heat is considerable, and it is damp heat, the worst possible for skins. Consequently if they are left for any time uncured they are very likely to go bad. So I think it is wiser to get the curing done. They can then be taken home at leisure, and properly dealt with there, if it is thought that the Srinagar curing has not been enough. If, however, the sportsman is only doing a short shoot, he may be able to take his trophies into Srinagar himself, and personally supervise their packing. If he can do this, it would probably be best for him to send them to England at once, simply wind-dried as they are, packed in a tin carefully soldered down. Even in this, however, there is some risk, as the

skins must pass through the summer's heat of the plains of India.

Most Kashmiri shikāris know how a skin should be taken off, but it is nevertheless well to supervise the operation. Head skins are usually turned inside out, and body skins stretched with nails. Powdered alum, well rubbed in, is the best preservative I know of, but care should be taken that the skins are dried in the shade. The shikāri will want to put them into the sun, and will do so unless prevented. It is well to paint the head skins with arsenical soap all round the lips, eyes, nose, and ears, and wherever there are any hollows. One of the hardest things, I always found, was to get the meat and fat all cleaned off properly without cutting the skin. No shikāri that I have ever seen will do this of his own accord. It is a troublesome operation at the best of times, and requires much patience and some dexterity. It is a good plan to take, for pegging out skins, a lot of nails about 4 inches long, each with a hole through the head, so that they can be kept together strung on a piece of wire. This helps to prevent loss. Commercial naphthaline, procurable at any druggists in Calcutta, or at the Stores in Bombay, is about the best thing to put with skins when packed to send home. No insect will go near it. Turpentine is admirable for pouring into the hollows of horns.

CHAPTER XXIX

COST OF SHOOTING IN KASHMIR

Rates fixed by Durbar—Rates for transport—Cost of three months' trip in Bāltistān—My own charges there—Corresponding cost in Ladāk—Cost if sportsman takes his wife to Ladāk—Actual transport charges in Ladāk—Cost of journey to Srinagar—Sheep occasionally for servants—Washing face.

Living in Kashmir is cheap, and the cost of a shooting trip is very moderate, unless the sportsman encumbers himself with too much baggage. A great deal has been done of recent years to assist travellers and reduce things to a system, and rates have been fixed by the Durbar for the hire of coolies, ponies, yāks, and boats. Most of the main routes have been marked off into regular stages, and information is published as to the supplies, etc., obtainable at different places. A special officer, maintained by the State, looks after the wants of visitors to Srinagar, and furnishes all who require it with a statement of the prices of most commodities. A small pamphlet is published, containing the rules laid down for the guidance of visitors, and giving the rates fixed for transport on the commoner routes. Strangers would do well not to promise payment

at the rates they are asked until they have had an opportunity of consulting this useful book. For instance, at Bārāmulla, when engaging boats, no fixed sum should be agreed to, but the boatmen told that they will be paid at Srinagar whatever has been fixed by the Durbar as the correct amount. When making double and treble marches carriage is changed at the different stages as far as possible. In any case, whether changed or not, payment is made, as a rule, according to the stages travelled. The usual rates are, for coolies 4 annas a stage, ponies 8 annas, and yāks the same. For some of the stages which are longer than the others 6 annas have been fixed for the coolie, and 12 annas for the pony or yāk. A coolie's load is 25 seers (50 lbs.); that of a pony 3 maunds (247 lbs.); and that of a yāk 4 maunds (329 lbs.) Although it is well to have spare ropes, the coolies, and pony and yāk-men, generally have their own. Balti coolies have special ropes of black wool, provided with pieces of forked stick, which act as hooks in fastening on the loads. The ponies and yāks all have wooden pack-saddles, and the owners of the former generally provide cloths of a kind of gunny (tāt), furnished with loops of rope, in which they lace up the luggage that is to be carried. The yāk-men usually give the most trouble, as they often have an insufficiency of ropes.

I give below an estimate for a three months' trip to Bāltistān, based on the expenditure which I myself incurred. This, it must be remembered, includes only the money that would be actually spent during the time in travelling, wages, living, etc. :—

		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Servants	1 shikāri at Rs.25 + 5 rasad	30	0	0			
	1 cook at Rs.12 + 5 rasad	17	0	0			
	1 tiffin coolie at Rs.8 + 2.8 rasad	10	8	0			
	3 permanent coolies at Rs.7 + 2.8 rasad	28	8	0			
	Total	86	0	0			
Total cost of servants for three months					258	0	0
Add for occasional local shikāri					42	0	0
Coolies and ponies—about 16 men or 8 ponies a day, at Rs.4 a day					360	0	0
Food at R.1 a day					90	0	0
Miscellaneous					50	0	0
					800	0	0

I generally found that 16 coolies were enough in addition to 5 permanent men when marching into Haramosh. When going about the nalas there with a small camp, and when crossing to Astor, I generally had 7 to 9 men. From Astor to Bandipur I had 8 ponies. No doubt I could all through have managed with less transport, but I did not care to run the matter too fine, and winked at a good deal of laziness on the part of the Kashmiris. It is always wiser to spend a little more than is necessary, and keep a contented camp, than to be too particular about trifles, and thereby turn the men rusty on whose willing co-operation so much of the success of the expedition depends.

My actual expenses from the 26th of March, when I started from Mānasbal, to the 28th of June, when I arrived there for the second time, were :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
For servants	374	14	0
,, coolies and ponies . . .	424	13	0
,, food	94	5	0
,, miscellaneous	66	3	6
	960	3	6

The transport charges include the cost of extra post-runners whenever employed, and that of sending in the horns and skins to Srinagar. Under miscellaneous has been entered the various tips given at different times to lambardars, the Haramosh Munshi, and others. The total is too high in the matter of travelling and servants, partly because I was overcharged occasionally, and also because I had more permanent coolies than were necessary. Any one could, I think, do a three months' trip in Bāltistān very easily on about Rs.250 a month.

As to Ladāk, I should think the same rate would be amply sufficient. A shikāri there should not cost more than Rs.15 a month plus Rs.5 for rasad. This was what I paid Rupsang, and a better shikāri I do not wish to have. The remaining charges would be much the same as in Bāltistān. If the sportsman takes his wife to Ladāk as I did, the cost of his transport and food will be nearly doubled, but his servants will cost him but little more than if he were alone. The following may be taken as a fair estimate:—

		Rs.	a.	p.
Servants	1 shikāri at Rs.15 + 5 rasad . .	20	0	0
	1 cook at Rs.15 + 5 rasad . .	20	0	0
	Carry forward . .	40	0	0

		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
	Brought forward . .	40	0	0			
Servants	1 khidmatgar at Rs.12 + 5 rasad .	17	0	0			
	1 sweeper at Rs.7 + 3 rasad . .	10	0	0			
	1 permanent coolie at Rs.8 + 3 rasad .	11	0	0			
	Total . . .	78	0	0			
Total cost of servants for three months .					234	0	0
Add for occasional local shikāri . .					36	0	0
Transport at Rs.7 a day for 14 ponies or yāks					630	0	0
Food at Rs.2 a day . . .					180	0	0
Miscellaneous					120	0	0
					1200	0	0

A couple could, I think, easily do a three months' trip in Ladāk for Rs.400 a month. I found that our transport from the 28th of June, when I left Mānasbal for my second trip up the Sind valley, to the 17th of October, when we reached Srinagar, including the cost of post-runners and of the ponies used by my wife when she marched with the Beeches and Captain Trench to Leh, came to Rs.780.4, or roughly, an average of Rs.7 a day for the 111 days. This includes ponies frequently allowed to different men, *e.g.* on the Hanlè trip the shikāri always rode, and while in Changchenmo I had four riding ponies. As a general rule, I found that about twelve animals were enough to carry our combined baggage, though at starting from Leh on the 13th of July I took no less than fifteen ponies. This was partly because at the beginning of a trip the supplies are at a maximum, and partly because I had not arranged the loads as economically as I might have done. As supplies were consumed the number of animals naturally decreased. From the 18th to the end of the month 13 yāks

proved more than enough, and from the 1st of August on, 11 were sufficient. A fair estimate as to yāks can always be obtained from the number of ponies which are found necessary. Roughly, if this be reduced by one-fifth, the resulting figure will be the number of yāks required. Thus 15 ponies took our things to Gya, where we had to change to yāks, therefore 12 of these beasts should have been more than enough, especially as some supplies had been consumed. I took 13, but found that they were not all adequately loaded.

The estimates I have given above deal only with expenditure incurred while actually travelling on the expedition. The cost of coming into the country, of tents and camp equipage, of stores and clothes, of guns and ammunition, has all to be added. This will vary so much with a sportsman's means and individual tastes, that it is impossible to frame an estimate which would be generally applicable. Even the expenditure on arriving at Srinagar, which might almost be considered a constant quantity, may vary considerably. One man may travel by tonga the whole way, or even, if pressed for time, take a second tonga with his luggage. Another may do the same journey in a couple of ekkas. As a tonga costs Rs.134 from Rawal Pindi to Srinagar, and an ekka only costs Rs.21, the saving in using the latter conveyance is very marked. It is simply a question of means and time. The tonga might do the journey in two days, but will probably take three. The ekka will take six.

I found it a good plan to occasionally give a sheep as a present to the servants. I did this usually after a

specially hard march, or after any bit of particular luck out shooting. The practice helps greatly to make the sportsman popular with his men, keeps his servants in good humour, and makes them take a personal interest in the sport obtained.

TONGA AS USED ON THE SRINAGAR RAWAL PINDI ROAD.

As a general rule, the face should not be washed in the early morning before going out if snow or cold wind has to be encountered. Instead, it is usually advisable to rub it over with vinolia cream, lanoline, or vaseline, to prevent the skin peeling. This precaution is absolutely necessary when marching on snow.

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